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BOE bids farewell to Guerrero, Hofschneider. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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75¢

Federal shutdown could hit PSS

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

If the federal government shutdown that is currently plaguing the U.S. mainland extends beyond March 2019, that could start to affect the CNMI Public School System, according to a state education official.

PSS federal programs officer Tim Thornburg told the Board of Education Friday that, so far, PSS is financially capable of weathering the federal shutdown; however, should it last beyond March 2019, PSS is expected to take a blow.

"All of our [federal] education grants are forward-funded," Thornburgh said in a later interview. That means money is first appropriated to the agency—as opposed to monthly payouts or other types of payment.

"Education is one of two departments in the federal government that makes money," Thornburg explained, adding that student loans and other payments are used to forward-fund state education agencies after U.S. Congress appropriates them.

"None of our programs are in jeopardy," BOE chair Marylou Ada stated in a separate interview. "We have until probably midway until the grant year because every grant has a different timeline, so hopefully the government will resolve whatever issues it may have, so that we will be fully functional."

See FEDERAL on Page 4

OUTGOING BOE MEMBERS
Long-time Board of Education member Herman Guerrero is honored before his last board meeting Friday morning. BOE Tinian representative Florine Hofschneider, also an outgoing board member, was similarly honored despite being off-island.
ERWIN ENCINARES
See story on Page 3

CUC fails to fill some vacant posts

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has failed to fill certain vacant upper management positions as required by the federal court's stipulated order No. 1.

Sirok

In CUC's status report filed before the U.S. District Court for the NMI last Friday, CUC legal counsel James S. Sirok said CUC is looking to fill the positions of chief engineer, chief financial officer, and water and wastewater manager.

Sirok expects Stipulated Order 1 coordinator William Gilmore and CUC executive director Gary Camacho to advise and inform the court, the U.S. Department of Justice, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency of the status of these vacancies during a forthcoming status conference.

CUC submitted its status report

See CUC on Page 4

Torres, Palacios start new administration

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Campaigning on a promise of "true progress," Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Senate President Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan) will be taking their oaths of office today as the ninth governor and 12th lieutenant governor of the CNMI at noon at the Northern Mariana Islands Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

The inaugural ceremonies begin with Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang taking his oath of office

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Sixty Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 have been deployed to Tinian
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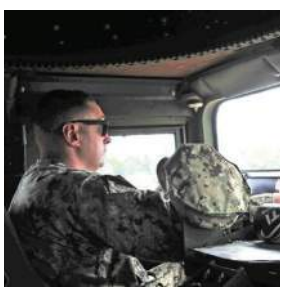

LOCAL
For one Seabee, being on Tinian has a special, personal significance.
PAGE 18

LIFE & STYLE
R. Kelly denies all allegations of sexual misconduct involving women and underage girls.
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Local

Jan. 15 is final sweep for typhoon debris

This Jan. 15, 2019, is the final sweep of all typhoon debris.

The Saipan Mayor's Office and the Department of Public Works have already made several passes through the villages, removing tin, lumber, vegetative waste, mattresses, furniture and the aftermath of Super Typhoon Yutu.

As the men and women clearing the way to build a more resilient Saipan prepare for final sweeps throughout the villages, they ask that residents do not throw their household garbage into the storm debris piles.

Household waste has slowed the process of clearing storm-related debris, and may cause other health-related issues should this continue.

"As a community, we have to take responsibility and take care of our household generated waste and not make the work of DPW and the mayor harder than it has to be," said the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality in a statement.

After Jan. 15, 2019, any household garbage found alongside the public right-of-way will be considered littering. This illegal dumping will result in fines in accordance with the CNMI Litter Control Regulations. ***(BECQ)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Humanities awards on Thursday

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council will be hosting the 21st Governor's Humanities Awards at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Giovanni's Restaurant on Thursday, Jan. 24, starting at 11am. ***(PR)***

Kagman schools to have PTSA meeting

The Kagman cluster of schools will be having a Parents Teachers Students Association meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019 at 5:30pm at the Chacha Ocean View Middle School cafeteria. Call the school at 237-3921, 664-4100, or 664-3911 if you have any questions or concerns. ***(PR)***

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BOE bids farewell to Guerrero, Hofschneider

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Board of Education bid farewell Friday to two of its long-time members, giving way to a gubernatorial appointment and a newly elected director to join its ranks.

At their last meeting in the BOE building on Capital Hill, the BOE honored Saipan representative Herman Guerrero and Tinian representative Florine Hofschneider for their services.

Guerrero holds the title of longest-serving BOE member at 16 years of service while Hofschneider has three terms under her belt.

"We are going to miss [Guerrero's] presence. …He is a really dominant figure in our BOE meetings. He has been really helpful and [we rely a lot on] his institutional knowledge on educational issues. We are really going to miss him," said BOE chair Marylou Ada, who has worked with Guerrero in the BOE for nine years.

Ada noted that she and Guerrero have also worked on other projects even prior to working in the BOE.

"I started working alongside him during the third Constitutional Convention. After that, we served together at the Northern Marianas Humanities Council for four years [before working together again] at the BOE," Ada recalled.

"I asked him where he is going next because it seems we are always following each other, but it's a different path this time. I admire the guy very much—he is an inspiration to all of us," she said. "It would be so unusual to go into a BOE meeting and Herman is not there because he was a permanent fixture in the past."

Ada also holds Hofschneider in high regard. "Hofschneider represented Tinian with distinction," said Ada. "…[She] is an educator, so she brings that side of expertise to the table."

"Both [Guerrero and Hofschneider] are passionate educators," BOE member Janice Tenorio said, recalling a time when Hofschneider was her boss at the Northern Marianas College. "Her being a board member for the past four years was a great contribution," she added, citing Hofschneider's contributions to the Refaluwasch and bilingual language and heritage studies.

The new BOE members would be sworn into office today at the Capital Hill office. Guerrero is limited by the CNMI Constitution to the maximum number of terms while Hofschneider did not seek re-election.

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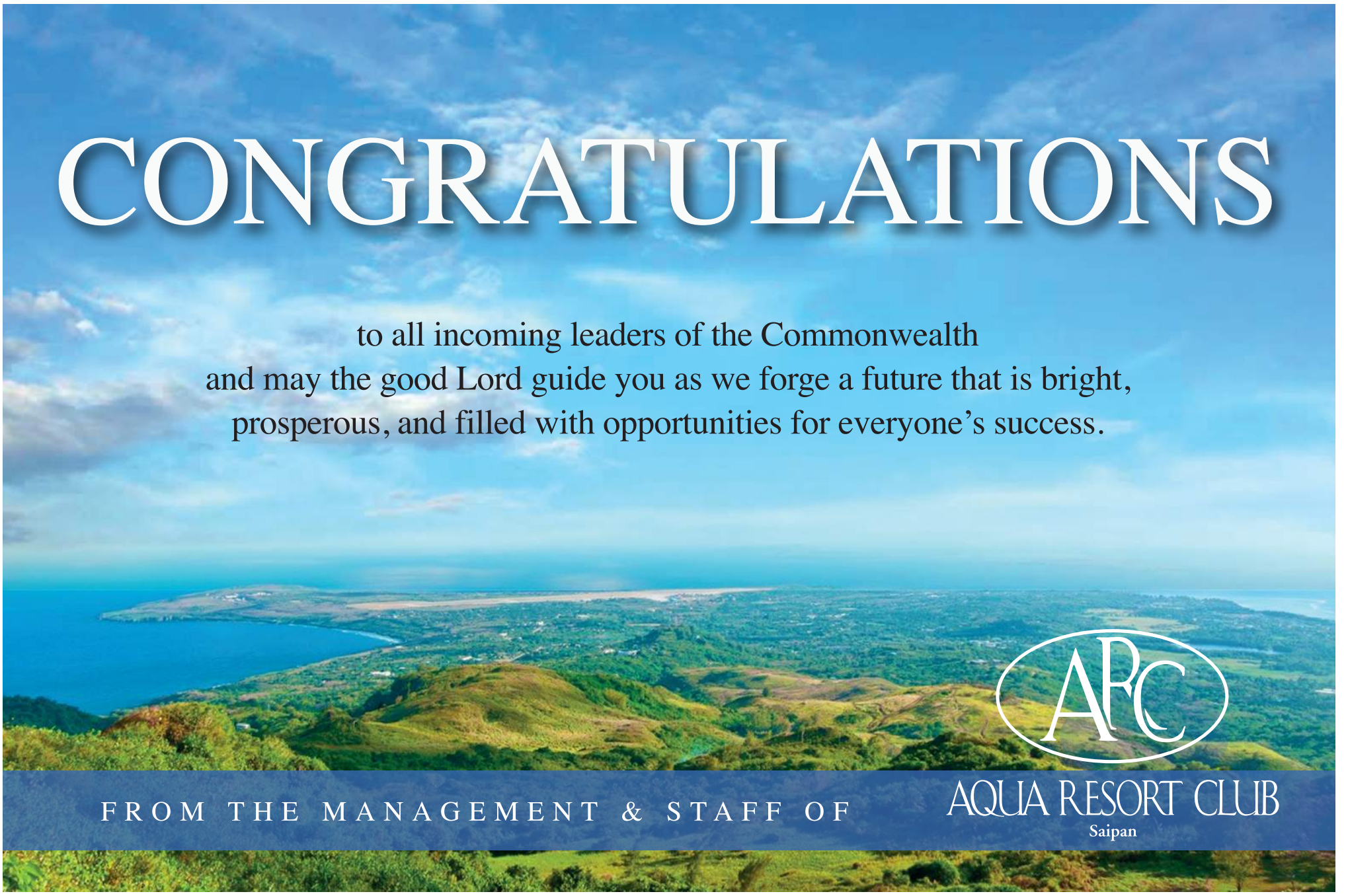
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APC
FROM THE MANAGEMENT & STAFF OF
AQUA RESORT CLUB
Saipan

House legal counsel takes share of blame

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The legal counsel of the CNMI House of Representatives took a share of the blame in the confusion that stymied the passage of the bill that sought to adjust the salaries of lawmakers.

Joe Taijeron said that he was the one who advised House co-counsel John Cool about the conflict of interest clause as stated in Section 15 of the CNMI Constitution that says members of the Legislature that have financial or personal interest in a bill may not debate or vote on that legislation.

"Logically, the reason for the [governor's] veto was based on the insufficiency of the votes based on Section 7 (d). Members must vote on the required number, which is 15. We believe there won't be an issue anymore if the 15 is met. When [House Bill] 20-195 passed, there was only seven who voted and not 15," Taijeron informed members yesterday.

"I sided with the governor and the AG that we only have seven votes and did not have 15 when H.B. 20-195 passed. I take responsibility for that because I gave legal advice personally and was concurred by Mr. Cool, which cited Section 15 prohibiting members who wanted to vote. And with the incumbents coming back in the 21st, we believe in good faith that they have a financial interest."

Article II Section 15 of the CNMI Constitution advises that a member of the Legislature "who has a financial or personal interest in a bill before the Legislature shall disclose that interest and may not debate on or vote on the bill."

The Senate presents commemorative resolutions to former CNMI State Board of Education chair Herman T. Guerrero, and Drs. Bobby Cruz, Rizalina Maratita Liwag, and Yvonne R. Pangelinan last Wednesday.

JON PEREZ

Senate commends NMI educators

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate honored the combined contributions of four educators by presenting former CNMI State Board of Education chair Herman T. Guerrero, and Drs. Bobby Cruz, Rizalina Maratita Liwag, and Yvonne R. Pangelinan each with commemorative resolutions last Wednesday.

The Senate introduced four resolutions: Senate Resolutions 20-33, 20-35, 20-37, and 20-42.

S.R. 20-33, 20-25, and 20-37 congratulate Liwag, Cruz, and Pangelinan for obtaining their respective doctorate degrees, while S.R. 20-42 commends Guerrero for his years of service as a BoE member.

Liwag obtained her Doctor of Education in Administrative Leadership for Teaching and Learning. "We're happy to receive this recognition for my 25 years of service to the [the CNMI State Public School System] and my recent professional success with my doctorate degree. I'm overwhelmed with the honor and my family also appreciate this award," said Liwag.

Cruz, who is the first on both sides of his family to earn a doctorate, said the Senate commendation "feels like it is a challenge that they placed on our shoulders. Completing the degree was already a challenge itself. Now that we gained knowledge, the question now is what do we do from here?"

"All of our commitment is to continue to promote a positive social change. If we can achieve this, we hope it would inspire others to continue to pursue their dreams. I dedicate this to my family…but also to everyone in the CNMI who dream of accomplishing something."

Pangelinan said her doctorate is the product of the relationships she had formed with many individuals throughout her years with PSS.

"Also, the sacrifice that my family made, especially my husband [Wayne Pangelinan] who took many responsibilities over the years and my children who also sacrificed a lot. This degree is an accomplishment, but it belongs to the students who shared their stories with me."

She added that their goal has always been to improve the quality of education for all CNMI students.

Liwag obtained her Doctor in Education degree by taking continuing credits from Baker University in Kansas, University of San Diego, and University of Hawaii, while Cruz earned his Administrative Leadership for Teaching and Learning from Walden University in Minnesota. Pangelinan finished her doctor in Administration for Teaching and Learning also at Walden.

Guerrero, who became a BoE member during the leadership of then-Education commissioner Dr. Rita H. Inos, also thanked the Senate despite their differences in the past. "I know that over the years I've been a thorn on the side of the legislators, in terms of reminding them of their responsibilities of funding PSS appropriately."

"I must say that despite our differences, you have helped PSS to where we are now. I'm grateful after serving the BoE for the last 17 years. … We have a good system. When I first came to the board, with Dr. Inos at the helm, she has done an excellent job and pointed us in the direction of improving the system."

He added that any accomplishment made by PSS could also be credited to the members of the Legislature and other elected leaders. "You continue to support PSS. Thank you all. Your support for PSS is for the future of our kids to become well educated students.

"Well-educated students would them take care of their parents and grandparents. They learn to make sound decisions so we can avoid falling in the same trap that we had in the past and that we learn from those mistakes."

FEDERAL

From Page 1

"At this point, no critical services will be affected and there is no impediment at all…at this time," she added.

However, a contingency plan for a worst-case scenario—the federal shutdown lasting beyond March 2019—must be in place, insists BOE Tinian representative Florine Hofschneider.

"We have some carryover money from the previous fiscal year [fiscal year 2018], so I can say with absolute certainty that, in a worst-case basis, we would be able to provide school meals," Thornburg told Hofschneider.

Hofschneider insists that each school should individually set up its own contingency plan for the worst-case scenario.

"We can't really put all our eggs in the [it-might-not-happen] basket. …There are other things that have happened at the federal level that we never thought would happen, so just in the event that it happens, we need to have a back-up plan," Hofschneider said.

In an interview, Ada noted that PSS has faced similar situations with past presidents.

"We have a contingency plan, we have been through this before a couple of years ago," she said, recalling a near-shutdown during the Obama administration, and even the Bush administration.

"…We have a direct line to the U.S. Department of Education, [specifically] to our grantees, where if there is a shutdown that will affect the CNMI and our grant programs, they would call us ahead of time and advise us," she said. She is confident that the U.S. education department will to notify them at least a week before a possible shutdown.

"We would know if any critical projects would be affected because we would be alerted right before it happens, not after. But we do have a contingency plan," she added.

About half of PSS' budget for fiscal year 2018 consists of federal grants and monies. PSS was appropriated $41.8 million for fiscal year 2019. They pitched an expenditure report of $55 million for their operations for the fiscal year.

CUC

From Page 1

in court prior to the status conference.

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated Judge David O. Carter will hold a weeklong status conference that will begin on Jan. 29, 2019, about various CUC projects.

Sirok said Carter informed the parties that he would like to learn of the status of the various activities and requirements relevant to SO1 and Stipulated Order 2.

SO 1 focuses on drinking water and wastewater and the restructuring of CUC's organization. SO 2 focuses on oil issues and also applies to oil spills and the remediation of the contaminated power plants.

Sirok said because of the dynamic nature of CUC's post-Super Typhoon Yutu recovery effort, the status of SO1 facilities and water well operations continues to evolve on a daily and weekly basis.

Sirok said water wells are back in operation as part of CUC's post-typhoon effort to provide 24-hour drinking water service to the residents of Saipan.

CUC is expected to provide an updated report on the status of those water wells during the status conference.

Sirok said CUC has also been working to discover instances of water theft and referring these cases to the Office of the Attorney General for action.

"However, to date CUC is not aware of any prosecutions of water theft cases," said Sirok as he requested that this issue of water theft continue to be placed on the court's agenda for discussion during the status conference.

On SO2 projects, Sirok said he was informed that projects under the outstanding task orders are moving along on a timely basis without any major problems.

Sirok said the parties agree that the remaining and expected Engineering and Environmental Management Company account funds are being used efficiently.

"CUC also believes that the parties are progressing toward completion of these priority projects in a positive manner without conflict or dispute between EEMC and CUC.

Gilbane Federal is the court-appointed EEMC, that is tasked to oversee some of the SO2 projects.

Sirok said CUC feels that its work and coordination with the EEMC and with the DOJ and EPA, related to specific work being performed, or to be performed, under the various uncompleted task orders, has developed into a very good, strong and cordial team working environment.

"There are no critical issues concerning the EEMC and its role related to SO2 projects which CUC feels a need to be address at this time," he said.

TORRES

From Page 1

for a second four-year term at 8:30am, while the 21st Legislature will be holding theirs also in the morning with the House of Representatives set at 10am while the Senate set at 11am.

Matthew Deleon Guerrero, the 2019 Inauguration Committee chair, said they want to bring the community together to celebrate the people's resiliency and strength in the continuing recovery efforts from Super Typhoon Yutu.

"The 2019 Inauguration Committee has put their hearts into providing the public a great set of events for our community to participate in and enjoy. We welcome and look forward to seeing our community come together," Deleon Guerrero said.

An inaugural luncheon will immediately follow the ceremony on the soccer field grounds.

In celebration of the inaugural festivities, numerous dignitaries from Micronesia, Guam, the Pacific, and the U.S. mainland will be in attendance.

The 2019 CNMI Inaugural Festivities will be streamed live on the Office of the Governor Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CNMIGov and the Northern Marianas College Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NMC.Proa.

The 2019 Inaugural #MarianasStrong Concert kicked off the inauguration ceremonies last Saturday at the Marianas Business Plaza, with talents from throughout the Marianas.

Yesterday, the Inaugural Red Mass was held at the Mt. Carmel Cathedral, where the community joined in the blessing of the CNMI's newly elected and returning leaders.

BIBA!

Ralph & Arnold

Congratulations, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios as you embark on a journey of leadership and service to the people of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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Seabees deploy to support Tinian recovery efforts

By MCS2 MICHAEL LOPEZ
NMCB 3 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

OKINAWA, Japan—Sixty Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 have been deployed to Tinian to support relief efforts on the island following the onslaught of Super Typhoon Yutu in October 2018.

The NMCB-3 Seabees assumed charge of ongoing Tinian Defense Support of Civil Authorities from NMCB-1 during a relief in place/transfer of authority ceremony last Jan. 9.

Tinian and Saipan were devastated by Super Typhoon Yutu, which struck Oct. 24, 2018. Super Typhoon Yutu was the second-strongest storm system to hit U.S. territory in recorded history, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Many of the homes and structures on the islands were destroyed or severely damaged as a result of the natural disaster, and many were left without power and running water.

In response, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command stood up Task Force-West, divided into Task Group Saipan and Task Group Tinian, to conduct DSCA relief efforts in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"I feel incredibly excited and honored to be part of this mission," said Lt. Lawrence Burkart, officer in charge of NMCB-3, Det. Tinian. "An unfortunate tragedy happened to the people of Tinian and, with us being Seabees deployed to the Indo Pacific Region, humanitarian aid and disaster relief are in our hierarchy of priorities…so it is something we have all trained and volunteered for."

NMCB-1, along with other INDOPACOM units, cleared 64 miles of road, built more than 150 FEMA-provided tents for families whose homes became unlivable, and produced more than 54,000 gallons of potable water during the relief efforts. Following the debris cleanup, the unit focused on roof repairs in which they assessed over 300 households and executed 122 repairs.

"Thank you so much for coming this distance to be America's force that was able to help this community bring its services back online," said Rear Adm. Shoshana Chatfield, commander of Joint Region Marianas and Task Force West. "Your efforts here and the work that you did, the equipment that you brought, and the spirit that you gave to this community was appreciated deeply by the mayor. I want to thank you for approaching your work as though these were your own families."

MCS2 KELSEY J. HOCKENBERGER
Gov. Ralph DLG Torres addresses attendees during a relief-in-place and transfer of authority ceremony.

In his remarks, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres thanked the task force for delivering aid to those in need.

"Folks, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all the hard work and dedication and leaving your family to come here and providing a normalcy for other families you don't even know or never even met," said Torres. "Your work is definitely appreciated."

NMCB-3, Det. Tinian will take over the recovery and roof repair mission in an effort to restore many of the resident's homes to habitable conditions.

"Many of the people in Tinian can't live in their homes right now," said Burkart. "The roofs have either been completely or mostly destroyed, and with the frequent rain storms that this island gets, the residents are having an extremely tough time rebuilding their lives. We hope that putting roofs over their heads will give them the foundation they need to help return to life as they knew it."

Not every single destroyed roof on the island can be repaired. If the support structures vital to stability are not present, a roof cannot be placed. The Seabees will identify structures that are safe to repair, and in a structural condition that will be able to house residents following a repair. The Seabees plan to conduct expedient, high quality construction to return the identified structures to a state that can sufficiently shelter the residents.

"Our mission is two-fold," said Lt. Cmdr. Christian Auger, NMCB-3's operations officer. "First, and most importantly, we must provide the necessary structures and accommodations to relieve the suffering that was caused by Super Typhoon Yutu. The second part is to continue to develop and demonstrate the skills necessary to respond to any type of emergency, whether it be a humanitarian mission or a major combat operation, and this mission helps us demonstrate those skills."

NMCBs are part of the Naval Construction Force and specialize in providing contingency construction, disaster preparation and recovery support, humanitarian assistance, and combat operations support.

"As Seabees, we pride ourselves on the fact that we can build and fight," said Auger. "Tinian is an opportunity to provide relief and demonstrate our expeditionary construction abilities at the right time, at the right place."

Military service members from Joint Region Marianas and INDOPACOM continue to provide Department of Defense (DoD) support to FEMA, and work with Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands' civil and local officials for Typhoon Yutu recovery efforts. The DoD mission is expected to continue until the critical needs are met or FEMA officials have implemented the appropriate mix of civil and contracted solutions to allow them to continue to lead federal government relief and recovery efforts without DoD support.

The effort is a joint force endeavor that makes up the newly created Task Group Engineer, which employs units from the Navy, Army, and Air Force, and is operationally led by the Army's 84th Engineer Battalion, 130th Engineer Brigade, based out of Hawaii. Task Group Engineer replaces Task Group Tinian and Task Group Saipan.

NMCB-3 is forward deployed throughout the Indo-Pacific region and United States ready to support major combat operations, theater security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. Seabees provide general engineering and civil support to Navy, Marine Corps and joint operational forces globally.

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IDEAL SIGNS

SBA to close BRC office at Marianas Business Plaza

The U.S. Small Business Administration will close its Business Recovery Center at the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe at 5pm this Wednesday, Jan. 16.

SBA opened the center to provide personalized assistance to Rota businesses affected by Super Typhoon Yutu that occurred Oct. 24-26, 2018, and Typhoon Mangkhut that occurred Sept. 10-11, 2018.

The center is located at the third floor of the former Nauru building. It is usually open from 8am to 5pm. Until the center closes, SBA representatives will continue to meet with business owners to answer questions about SBA's disaster loan program, explain the application process, help each individual complete their electronic loan application and close their approved loans. No appointment is necessary.

SBA customer service representatives will continue to be available at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center on Saipan and at the Department of Commerce on Tinian to meet with businesses and residents, help each them apply for a disaster loan and close their approved loans.

The Saipan center is open Mondays to Fridays, from 9am to 6pm, and on Saturdays, 10am to 4pm; while the Tinian center is open Mondays to Fridays, from 9am to 6pm. No appointment is necessary.

So far, SBA has approved over $69.6 million in low interest disaster loans to help businesses and homeowners throughout the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands—$67.9 million for Super Typhoon Yutu and $1.75 million for Typhoon Mangkhut disasters.

Businesses of all sizes and private nonprofit organizations may borrow up to $2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory and other business assets. SBA can also lend additional funds to businesses and homeowners to help with the cost of improvements to protect, prevent or minimize the same type of disaster damage from occurring in the future.

For small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations of any size, SBA offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans to help meet working capital needs caused by the disaster. Economic injury assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any property damage.

Disaster loans up to $200,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for up to $40,000 to repair or replace damaged or destroyed personal property.

Interest rate is as low as 3.675 percent for businesses, 2.5 percent for private nonprofit organizations, and 2 percent for homeowners and renters with terms up to 30 years. Loan amounts and terms are set by SBA and are based on each applicant's financial condition.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. Individuals who are deaf or hardofhearing may call (800) 877-8339. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The deadline to apply for property damage for Typhoon Mangkhut is Jan. 27, 2019. The deadline to apply for economic injury is July 1, 2019.

The deadline to apply for property damage for Super Typhoon Yutu is Jan. 27, 2019. The deadline to apply for economic injury is July 26, 2019. ***(SBA)***

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FIRST ANNIVERSARY ERWIN ENCINARES

The Commonwealth Health Center outpatient pharmacy staff pose for a photo yesterday while celebrating their first year anniversary.

Las Vegas Night still on

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Super Typhoon Yutu has forced the Rotary Club of Saipan to reschedule the 2018 edition of its Las Vegas Night to the first quarter of 2019.

Club president Greg Borja confirmed Tuesday that the 2018 Las Vegas night, the club's largest annual fundraising event, has been already scheduled for March 23, 2019.

"We are going to do a St. Patrick's Day theme," Borja said.

The club is still looking to secure a venue for the event. "Our regular venue is still undergoing renovation," he added.

Las Vegas Night has been traditionally held at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Tagal Ballroom in Susupe.

"…We are trying to look for other areas and we would [release the information] as soon as possible once we figure out where our venue is going to be," he said.

Borja noted that the club has stopped selling tickets for the event since they did not want to print tickets out without information on the venue.

"The prizes will remain the same," he noted.

The raffle prizes for the Las Vegas Night almost always includes $10,000 or a car for the grand prize, $5,000 for second, and $3,000 for third, along with door prizes and several other minor prizes.

Parties in lawsuit over derailed UB40 concert reach settlement

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Saipan concert promoter Steven Brownstein and a former CNMI resident, Jason H. Aldan, have reached a settlement in connection with Brownstein's lawsuit over the derailed concert of the English reggae and pop bond UB40 in Guam and Saipan in 2005.

At a hearing following a settlement conference last Thursday, Steven P. Pixley, counsel for Brownstein, informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI that they have reached a monetary settlement amount, to be paid today, Monday.

According to the minutes of the hearing, Pixley said the parties would work out the terms in a written agreement. The settlement amount remains confidential.

Charity Hodson, counsel for Aldan, agreed with Pixley.

With the settlement, the case is expected to be dropped.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy presided over the settlement conference.

In April 2017, Brownstein, who owns Steven Brownstein Entertainment, filed the lawsuit against Fredrick Holloman and Aldan for allegedly defrauding his company of $115,000 by misrepresenting to have the UB40 perform in Guam and Saipan in 2015.

Holloman is a San Diego, California resident. Aldan works for CNMI Medical Referral in Hawaii but also has worked from time to time with Brownstein to bring entertainers to Saipan.

Brownstein filed claims of breach of contract by Holloman, and fraud and unjust enrichment by Holloman and Aldan.

In July 2017, Aldan, through counsel Robert T. Torres, filed a motion to dismiss the fraud and unjust enrichment claims against him.

In November 2017, the court granted that motion and dismissed the claims without prejudice, giving Brownstein leave to amend.

On January, 2018, Brownstein filed a first amended complaint naming only Aldan as a defendant and omitting the breach-of-contract claims against Holloman.

In response, Aldan filed a motion to require joinder of a necessary party, namely Holloman.

The matter was resolved when the parties stipulated that Brownstein would "file a second amended complaint" naming Holloman as a defendant in the civil proceeding.

On May 4, 2018, Brownstein filed a second amended complaint naming both Aldan and Holloman as defendants, and a new summons for Holloman was issued.

In response, Aldan filed his answer to the second amended complaint and counterclaim, alleging abuse of process by Brownstein.

Aldan counterclaimed for abuse of process. He asserted that Brownstein is using the lawsuit to make him (Aldan) "a scapegoat for the backlash, bad press, and embarrassment that Steven Brownstein Entertainment has encountered" when fans were struck with purchased tickets to canceled concerts.

Brownstein, through Pixley, then moved to dismiss the counterclaim.

Pixley argued that Aldan's failure to plead facts supporting the allegation that Brownstein maliciously resented Aldan, together with the narrow construction given the tort of abuse of process, mandates dismissal of the counterclaim.

Last July, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramoan V. Manglona granted Brownstein's motion to dismiss, but allowed him to amend his counter-complaint. Manglona ruled that Aldan has not stated a claim for abuse of process.

USVI utility firm sells excess transformers to the CNMI

The Water and Power Authority in the U.S. Virgin Islands is selling excess transformers and other supplies to help restore power in the Northern Mariana Islands, a fellow U.S. territory.

The islands of Tinian and Saipan were devastated last October by Super Typhoon Yutu. Proceeds from the sale of the unneeded equipment will be returned to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which paid for them to begin with.

Last Thursday, WAPA's governing board approved the sale of 675 excess transformers at an estimated cost of $1.3 million plus administrative fees. It also approved selling excess material and supplies usually used to redevelop an electric grid, such as pole hardware, conductors, insulators, and potheads, which are the familiar bell-shaped glass insulators on utility poles.

American Wire Group, a WAPA supply vendor, will purchase the excess materials from WAPA and will provide the materials to the Northern Mariana Islands to aid in the restoration there. FEMA has approved the sale of the materials and transformers, as the assets were initially purchased by WAPA and reimbursed by the federal government during the post-hurricane restoration.

The board also approved the sale of additional excess transformers, with a $2.5 million cap on all transformer sales. ***(PR)***

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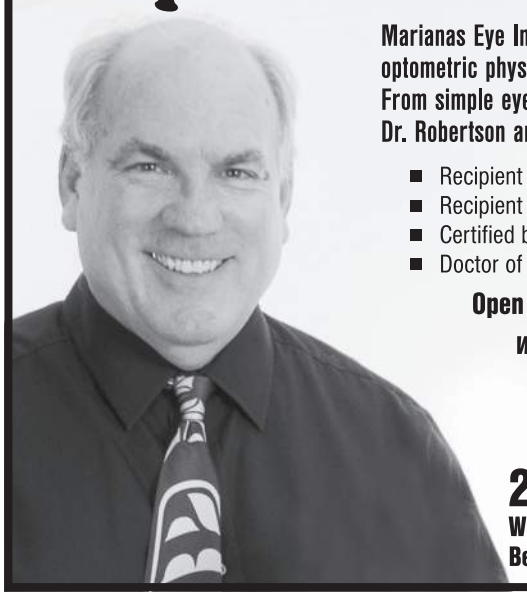

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MTEC Tourism Summit for students on Jan. 24

The Marianas Tourism Education Council Tourism Summit for CNMI Public School System students will be held on Jan. 24, 2019.

The theme of this year's summit, again co-organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority, is "#MarianasSTRONG," reflecting the resiliency and recovery of the Marianas tourism economy and community following Super Typhoon Yutu in October 2018.

This year's summit will be held at the former Mariana Resort & Spa, now operating as a Marianas Base Camp for typhoon recovery personnel.

"As every year, we are looking forward to welcoming students for the MTEC Tourism Summit as we address various aspects of tourism in our community," said MTEC chair Vicky Benavente. "This year we have the unique opportunity to give the students a hands-on experience at an operating hotel, thanks to our very supportive partners at [the Federal Emergency Management Agency] who have authorized us to hold the summit at the Marianas Base Camp this year. This will be our opportunity give the summit participants a tour of hotel operations."

In prior years, the summit was limited to members of school MY WAVE (Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically) Clubs, but due to the special challenges schools are facing following Yutu, this year's summit will be open to any student in grades 5-12, selected by their school to participate.

"Super Typhoon Yutu has been a tremendous challenge for young people in the Marianas, and the message that 'Tourism is Everybody's Business' is as true now as ever," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "The MVA is pleased to again be organizing the annual tourism summit with MTEC, and we look forward to dialoguing with the students on how a natural disaster like Yutu effects a tourism economy and a community, and more importantly, how we can come together #MarianasSTRONG to revive and rebuild tourism."

Approximately 400 students are expected for the summit, which is co-sponsored by T Galleria, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, Kanoa Resort, and the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Tourism-related exhibits will also be featured. MTEC board of directors include vice chair Wendi Herring (Fiesta Resort & Spa), Martin Duenas (MVA), Christopher Concepcion (MVA), Larry Lee, Naomi Nishimura (PSS), Gordon Marciano (PDI), Catherine Perry (Integrity Communications), Glenn Policare (Kanoa Resort), and Rose Ada-Hocog (PSS).

MTEC was formed in 2002 to heighten the community's awareness of the importance of tourism to the wellbeing of the people of the Northern Marianas Islands. MTEC's stated mission is three-fold: to foster community understanding and support of the visitor industry; educate the general public, especially school students, about the value, social benefits, and economic contributions made to the community by the visitor industry; and to instill, improve and promote the "Hafa Adai-Tirow" hospitality spirit throughout the island community. ***(MTEC)***

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Provision of Food and Beverage at Saipan T Galleria by DFS

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

DFS Saipan L.P. and T Galleria by DFS ("DFS"), is inviting initial discussions and proposals from qualified and experienced organizations to lease/s for 4 ground-floor spaces ranging approximately 900 sq. ft. to 4,000 sq. ft. for the operation of a food and beverage (F&B) facility in the 'south-end' of DFS Saipan. This prime location faces Beach Road with the specific intention to enhance the overall customer experience DFS.

DFS intends to launch a F&B experience with a Western, Local, Asian, Pizza, or Sushi 'bar-type' offering and is subsequently interested in engaging operating in and around any of these formats and in any sizes of lease space(s) detailed above.

Initial conversations have started and DFS encourages interested parties to contact Milan.Rabold@dfs.com

With more than 58 years of expertise in the travel retail industry, DFS is recognized in Saipan and around the world as the leading luxury shopping destination for the sophisticated global traveller. We enjoy this position attained by listening to our clientele, adapting to changes in our customer base, and continually responding with innovative concepts. Additional information about DFS can be found at https://www.dfs.com/en/about-dfs

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL AND PROJECT TIMELINE

1. All initial requests for information, on site meetings and/or further information in response to this RFP are due no later than 5:00 pm January 31, 2019.
2. DFS will thereafter evaluate all interest and coordinate with applicate enquiries as to next steps
3. DFS will attempt to select preferred proposers by February 28, 2019, at the latest. DFS does not, however, commit to accept any proposal and reserves the right to reject all of them or terminate this process. Once the evaluation process is completed, DFS will commence negotiations. DFS may choose to negotiate simultaneously with more than one proposer. DFS's objective is to complete contract negotiations by March 31, 2019, at the latest.
4. Project Timeline: Project initiation and planning phase must be completed by April 30, 2019. Project planning phase will determine the timeline and/or schedule for the remaining phases of the project.
5. The successful proposer will be expected to begin work on the project within 30 days of signing of the contract. The opening date will be agreed with DFS in the final negotiation of the contract and project plan.
6. The successful proposer will be expected to begin work on the project within 30 days of the agreed project timeline.

Civics contest focuses on 4th Amendment in 21st Century

SAN FRANCISCO—The 2019 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest offers high school students in the western United States and Pacific islands an opportunity to win cash prizes while learning about the role of the judicial branch in preserving our constitutional rights.

The theme of the contest is "The 4th Amendment in the 21st Century: What is an 'Unreasonable Search and Seizure' in the Digital Age?"

Students are challenged to write an essay or produce a short video focusing on how the federal courts have applied 4th Amendment protections to electronic data devices, particularly the cellphones upon which almost everyone relies.

The contest is open to young people in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, the U.S. territory of Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Students in grades 9-12 in public, private, parochial and charter schools, and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status are invited to participate.

The contest is organized by the Courts and Community Committee of the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit and sponsored by Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the federal district and bankruptcy courts in the15 judicial districts that make up the circuit.

A total of $7,000 in cash prizes will be awarded. The top three finishers in both the essay and video competitions will receive $2,000 for 1st place, $1,000 for 2nd place and $500 for 3rd place. The 1st-place winners along with a parent or guardian also will be invited to the 2019 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in Spokane, Washington.

Contest rules and other information are available now on the contest website: https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest/. Entries will be accepted beginning February 1, 2019. The deadline for entries is 11:59pm Pacific Time on April 1, 2019. Finalists will be announced in May and the winners in June.

For more information about the Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, contact the Ninth Circuit Office of the Circuit Executive, civicscontest@ce9.uscourts.gov/(415) 355-8873. ***(PR)***

Imperial Pacific to host Japan poker event on Saipan

The All Japan Poker Championship Asian Circuit will include this year a poker competition on Saipan for the first time ever, according to an article in ggrasia.com, a website that features developments in the casino industry in Asia.

The GGRAsia article states that competition is to be held at the Imperial Pacific Resort, a casino operated by a unit of Hong Kong-listed Imperial Pacific International Holdings Ltd, a company that is building a hotel on the site. The poker event will be held from Feb. 13 to 17, the AJPC said in a written announcement on Tuesday and cited in the GGRAsia story.

According to the story, the buy-in to the main competition will be $2,000 and a series of side events and cash games are also scheduled.

The AJPC said the Saipan tournament will likely attract players from Japan, "but also increase the number of entries its circuit events typically receive from other regional markets, including South Korea and Taiwan.

"We aim to hold the AJPC Asian Circuit in Saipan for the first Japan-based tournament to be held on the island," the announcement quoted AJPC chair Sasaki Yasuhiro as saying. "We will continue to build our brand through launching tournaments in new and exciting destinations."

Saipan is part of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. jurisdiction.

The AJPC is adding new competitions to its Asian circuit in places other than Saipan, including one competition in South Korea and others in Southeast Asia, with a view to expanding the number of players competing outside Japan.

The AJPC is based in Osaka and holds a number of events within Japan, including a yearly AJPC Championship, which it said was the "largest poker tournament" in Japan. The AJPC last year said it had enjoyed a period of growth with registrations increasing year-on-year. It also added Taiwan to its event circuit.

Free ferry for bike racers in hot pepper festival

If you've never biked the quiet roadways and backtrails of Tinian, the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16-17, 2019, will make it easier than ever with free transportation for bike racers from Saipan.

The 65K Pika Bike Race will be held on Feb. 16 at 6am and will begin and end at the festival site at Kammer Beach. Bikers from Saipan who register for the race will be able to travel on the Feb. 15 ferry to Tinian at 5pm.

"As much as possible, we want to give our support to the Tinian community, open this event to as many people as possible, and give bikers a chance to experience the beauty of the island during the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "This year, we are offering participants in the 65K Pika Bike Race the chance to ride the ferry for free, to and from Tinian. We invite everyone to come out and enjoy the weekend in beautiful Tinian."

To register for the 65K Pika Bike Race and avail of free ferry on Feb. 15, bikers may contact Alex Gozon at alexgozon@yahoo.com or 1.670.234.5416 or Dawn Sarmiento at dawnsarmiento@yahoo.com.

The MVA will offer ferry service between Tinian and Saipan on Feb. 15-18, 2018. The ferry schedule is: Feb. 15, departing Saipan at 5pm and departing Tinian that evening; Feb. 16, departing Saipan at 9am and departing Tinian at 4pm; Feb. 17, departing Saipan at 9am and departing Tinian at 4pm; and Feb. 18, departing Saipan at 8am and departing Tinian at 12pm. The *Super Emerald* ferry will depart from the Commonwealth Ports Authority dock in Lower Base; passengers and must check in one hour before departure.

Ferry round trip cost is $25 for ages 3-11, $35 for ages 12 and older, and free for children ages 0-2. For one way, the cost is $10 for ages 3-11, $18 for ages 12 and older, and free for children ages 0-2. Advance ticket purchase is required and will be accommodated on a first come, first served basis. Ticket purchases may be made at the MVA Office in Tinian or Saipan. Cash payments only will be accepted.

A repertoire of old and new competitions is also in the works, according to Concepcion. Other activities during the weekend include live entertainment, a variety of local dishes for sale, indigenous craft sales, and games such as *umang* (hermit crab) races and beach volleyball.

Campgrounds are open to the public at Kammer Beach, which has restrooms and showers.

The event is co-organized by the Tinian Mayor's Office and Tinian Municipal Council and sponsored by the Bicycling Association of Tinian and MVA members. Available hotels on island are Tinian Ocean View and Lorilynn's Hotel. Air service from Saipan to Tinian is provided by Star Marianas. Airport shuttle will be offered by the MVA to and from the festival site, which will be in San Jose village.

For more information on the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival, visit The Marianas Calendar at www.mymarianas.com or the MVA Facebook page, call the MVA Tinian office at 433-9365, or email MVA Tinian field supervisor Vida Borja at vborja@mymarianas.com. ***(MVA)***

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Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Listening to the alleged victims of R. Kelly

December saw many of us nestled inside watching romantic Hallmark Channel movies, but January brings a counterpunch: a twisted Lifetime saga of sexual abuse and control. Not romance-gone-wrong escapism, this is a six-part documentary: "Surviving R. Kelly," an examination of a long history of allegations against the Chicago R&B star.

Kelly has not been convicted of any sex crime and was acquitted of child pornography charges in Cook County in 2008. The Lifetime documentary, however, has brought to a national roar a story that isn't new to music fans or to Chicago. Troubling coverage of Kelly dates to his 1994 marriage to singer Aaliyah, when he was 27 and she was 15, and to reporting by Jim DeRogatis and Abdon Pallasch in the Chicago Sun-Times beginning in 2000. A girl born that year is now legal for a 52-year-old like Kelly to date in Illinois, where the age of consent is generally 17.

Press coverage, a trial and the passage of a generation haven't ended Kelly's career or even his artistic collaborations. This at a time when the #MeToo movement has held accountable numerous entertainment industry figures for their bad behavior. That raises a painful question and belated soul-searching by many people: Have disturbing claims, backed by hit song lyrics about age being "nothing but a number," drawn inadequate attention because the alleged victims are black girls?

A white juror from Kelly's child pornography trial appears in the documentary saying he didn't like the way the girls who testified dressed and acted, fueling his doubt about their accounts. But #MeToo has ushered in a new era in which claims of abuse and demands for justice are taken seriously.

Chance the Rapper apologized over the weekend for collaborating with Kelly in 2015. And commenters from Chicago and beyond—some of whom posted on social media about Kelly's predilections being common talk in the city—seemed to recognize at last that sexual behavior toward young girls isn't just creepy. If proven by the courts, it's criminal. We anticipate police and prosecutors are paying renewed attention to the allegations involving Kelly. Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx on Tuesday encouraged alleged victims to come forward.

Downloads of his music spiked higher after the documentary's airing. It's a distressing but probably natural bump, as listeners want to check out his sound and lyrics amid this renewed attention. It also points to the responsibility of consumers to vote with their dollars and downloads.

The volume and intensity of the Lifetime series has caused the public to tune in to what amounts to a harrowing cry. Will it be heard?

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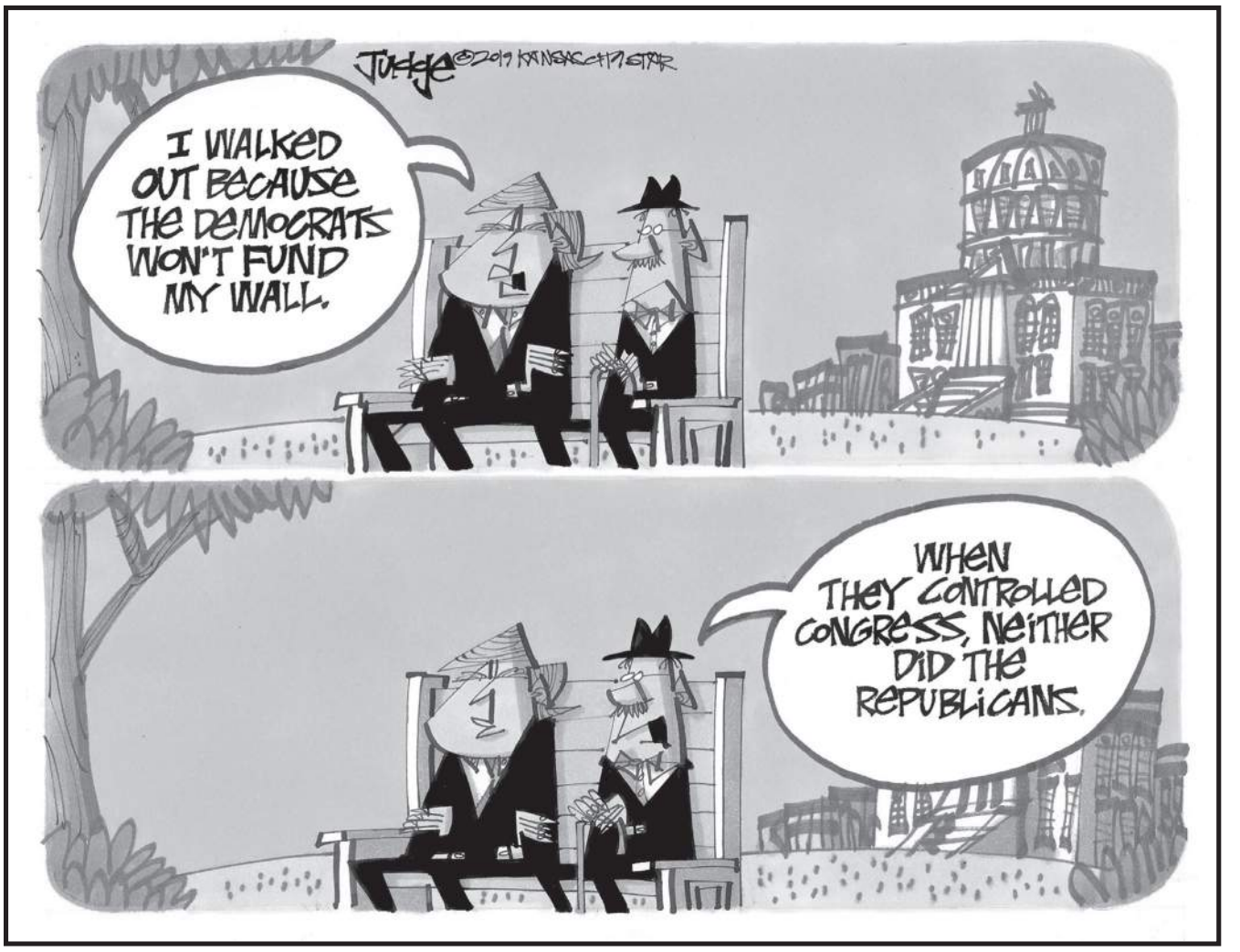


Instead of a border wall, Trump should fix America's crumbling infrastructure

By ANDRES OPPENHEIMER
Miami Herald

Andres Oppenheimer is a Latin America correspondent for the Miami Herald, 3511 N.W. 91 Avenue, Doral, Fla. 33172; email: aoppenheimer@miamiherald.com.

President Trump used fake data in his national address Tuesday to create a climate of anti-immigrant hysteria and get U.S. taxpayers to pay $5.7 billion for a border wall, but the fact remains that illegal immigration is at historic lows, and that undocumented immigrants commit far fewer crimes than native-born Americans.

Unless you are a Martian who just landed on Earth—or a regular viewer of Fox News—you should know by now that Trump's border wall project is a non-solution to a non-problem.

In fact, no serious study backs up Trump's claims to justify spending billions in taxpayers' money for a border wall, which he had originally promised would be paid for by Mexico.

Is there an invasion of illegal immigrants, as Trump claims? No. Despite a small uptick in recent months, border apprehensions of undocumented immigrants—a good way of measuring the influx—have plummeted from about 1.1 million in 2005 to 400,000 in 2017, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection figures.

Will the border wall stop illegal immigration? No. Two-thirds of all undocumented immigrants do not enter the country through the southern border. They arrive at U.S. airports with valid tourist or student visas and overstay their period of admission, according to a 2017 study by the nonpartisan Center for Migration Studies.

Does illegal immigration hurt Americans' jobs? No, false again. Most economists agree that undocumented immigrants do jobs that Americans don't want to do. In addition, with a historically low 3.9 percent unemployment rate, America's needs more immigrant workers to fill many construction and hospitality jobs.

Are undocumented immigrants violent criminals? No. On the contrary, undocumented immigrants commit fewer violent crimes than native-born Americans, according to a 2018 study by the libertarian CATO Institute. When I asked Cato Institute senior immigration policy analyst Alex Nowrasteh about Trump's claim that 63,000 Americans have been killed by illegal immigrants, he told me, "That's just nonsense."

Are illegal drugs coming from Mexico killing more Americans than were killed during the Vietnam War? Totally misleading. The current U.S. opioid crisis has many sources, including heroin coming from the southern border, doctor-prescribed drugs, and synthetic drugs coming from China through U.S. airports. Trump has deceptively put all hard drug-related deaths in the same bag—and blamed Mexico for them.

Trump is clearly trying to create an immigration crisis to fire up his base and divert attention from his mounting legal troubles. He wants TV networks to talk about an alleged immigration crisis, instead of focusing on the Mueller investigation into his campaign's ties with Russia and on more than a dozen other inquiries into alleged campaign violations, conflicts of interest and corruption.

He is also seeking a face-saving way out of the government shutdown that he himself created by linking congressional approval for the wall to keeping the government open. He may even declare an immigration "emergency" to bypass Congress and approve the funds for the wall by executive order.

Instead of using taxpayers' money to build his useless $5.7 billion border wall—which migrants would cross anyway, whether by digging tunnels under it or climbing over it—Trump should use that money to rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure.

As anybody who flies from Beijing or other modern Asian airports to the United States can tell you, arriving at the biggest U.S. airports increasingly feels like landing in a Third World country. Rather than building a "big, beautiful wall" in the desert, Trump should modernize airports in New York, Los Angeles and Miami.

Our roads, bridges and internet connectivity are way behind other industrialized countries. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) estimates that the country will need to spend about $4.5 trillion by 2025 to update its infrastructure, including roads, bridges and dams.

Trump could also put the $5.7 billion in federal funds to much better use by significantly upgrading existing trade agreements with Central America to promote economic development across the region and reduce the pressure for migration.

Unfortunately, Trump's whole charade about the border wall has nothing to do with stopping crime or improving Americans' lives. It's populist demagoguery, a huge smokescreen to shift our attention away from Trump's legal troubles.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Magellan's revenge

By ED STEPHENS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Visit Ed Stephens Jr. at EdStephensJr.com. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.

In March we'll be two years away from the 500th anniversary of Ferdinand Magellan's visit to the Mariana Islands. There will surely be some hoopla when that milestone arrives. If you're looking to hold a theme party you can't miss.

While you're adjusting your social calendar, some astronomers, thanks again to Magellan, are doing some adjusting of their own. They reckon that a galaxy named after Magellan is on a collision course with our galaxy, the Milky Way. We're due to get belly-punched in 2.4 billion years, give or take about a billion either way.

So, eventually, our intrepid Portuguese navigator will get the last laugh.

The Milky Way galaxy has a number of smaller galaxies that hang out in the neighborhood. Two such galaxies are called the Large Magellanic Cloud and the Small Magellanic Cloud. These are so named because Magellan mentioned them in his notes when he saw them. They are very prominent features of the southern hemisphere's sky. What looked like fuzzy "clouds" in the night sky were actually galaxies, but the "cloud" name stuck.

The LMC and the SMC are something of a cozy pair and, from what I think I know (no guarantees here) they're gravitationally associated with each other.

It's possible that the LMC and SMC are not of the same origins as the Milky Way but are, instead, travelers from somewhere distant. Whoa. That's spooky.

Anyway, I'll finally get to the point here. The Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, February, 2019, issue contains an article: "The aftermath of the Great Collision between our Galaxy and the Large Magellanic Cloud."

The LMC is, right now, actually heading away from the Milky Way, but this is expected to change in a billion years when the LMC will boomerang and then home-in on our mother galaxy.

The article predicts that the smash-up will suck so much material into the Milky Way that the supermassive black hole at our galaxy's center will increase in mass by a factor of eight.

As things stand now, the Milky Way is apparently a bit underweight in its belly. But when it gobbles up the LMC's mass the Milky Way will be have a more typical profile.

With that idea in mind, the article notes: "At the end of this exceptional event, the MW (Milky Way) will become a true benchmark for spiral galaxies, at least temporarily."

You did note that "temporarily," right? I sure did. I did because of something that freaks me out.

Before I get to that freak out, though, let me mention the "spiral galaxies" reference that came before the "temporary" reference. The "spiral" refers to the beautiful spiral shape (like a pinwheel) of the Milky Way galaxy. This shape must be scientifically inferred. It can't be directly observed, at least in total, any more than you can directly observe the appearance of your house when you're sitting within it. But the Milky Way inference is pretty reliable, and telescopes can see the structure of similarly-shaped galaxies.

A spiral galaxy shape is breathtaking, every bit as striking as Saipan's coral lagoon. If you get a sense of pleasure living amidst the natural beauty of Saipan, then you can relate to the fact that many astronomy enthusiasts actually have the same sense of wonder about the appearance of our home galaxy.

Hey, so far, so good, right? Well, yeah, but now we have to look at this "temporary" reference.

The LMC (which is about 163,000 light-years distant) isn't the only galaxy destined to smack into the Milky Way. There's another one in the works. It's called Andromeda galaxy.

Andromeda is far more distant (2.4 million light-years) than the LMC. Andromeda is also far bigger. It is, in fact, more massive than the Milky Way itself. Like the Milky Way it has a very nice spiral structure. Well, temporarily, that is. That's because in about 4 billion or 5 billion years, long after the Milky Way has digested the LMC's punch, Andromeda and the Milky Way are going to smoosh together. The resulting galaxy is expected to become a big blob, known more formally as an "elliptical" galaxy. The well-defined arms of our spiral shape will be merely a faded memory. Ditto for Andromeda.

If you want to take it personally, I guess that notion is a little bit depressing. But that's not what freaks me out. No, what freaks me out is that when I look at Andromeda though binoculars or a telescope, where it's this hugely impressive presence, I recall that it's coming straight for us at a speed of 250,000 miles per hour. Sure, I know that it's so distant that it's no threat to any human (humans, and probably all life on Earth, will be long gone when the collision happens), but, well, in galaxies, as in artillery, incoming is incoming. Yikes!

So, in galactic terms, the long term isn't looking so great. It's probably better to focus on things nearer to home and closer on the calendar. So let's ink that Magellan party for 2021, OK? We'll toast each other. We'll toast ol' Ferdinand. And then we'll toast our beloved Milky Way, which is destined to become a big-bellied cosmic blob.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Filling the House vacancy

In a Saipan Tribune story titled "It's open season," it was "reported," in extensive speculative detail, that there will be a special election to fill the "vacancy" created by the death of Rep. Frank Dela Cruz, may he rest in peace.

I would call this story irresponsible but for the final paragraph, which reads, "Chief solicitor Charles E. Brasington told Saipan Tribune on Tuesday that the CNMI Constitution and statutes are straightforward about the issue whether a special election will be held or not."

This is an absolutely mind-boggling statement by Mr. Brasington. There is, in fact, absolutely nothing in the CNMI Constitution or statutes directly addressing the question of what happens when a member-elect of the Legislature dies before being sworn in.

Mr. Brasington makes the unsupported assumption that the death of Rep. Dela Cruz (representative-elect for the 21st House) created a "vacancy" to be filled pursuant to Section 9 of Article II of the Commonwealth Constitution. If this were true, his statement would be correct. The CNMI Constitution and statutes are "straightforward" on the issue of what happens when there is a vacancy.

I contend, however, that there is not at this time any vacancy on account of the simple truth that the 21st House of Representatives does not yet exist and will not exist until it organizes itself on Monday pursuant to Section 14 of Article II of the Commonwealth Constitution.

To be precise, there is no vacancy except in the 20th Legislature which, if it has not already adjourned sine die, in any case expires on Monday. If that vacancy were in question, Article II, section 9 clearly states it would be filled by appointment.

Thus, Mr. Brasington is not only wrong, but he is presuming to usurp the authority of the 21st House of Representatives. This is because Article II, Section 14(a) of the Commonwealth Constitution plainly states, "Each house of the legislature shall be the final judge of the election and qualification of its members…"

On Nov. 13, 2018, the voters of Precinct 3 spoke with their ballots and let their views be known on who should represent them in the 21st House of Representatives. Rep. Dela Cruz was the fifth highest vote getter and was declared a winner by the Commonwealth Election Commission performing its ministerial duty under the Election Law. Rep. Donald Barcinas was the seventh highest vote-getter. With the passing of Rep. Dela Cruz, Rep. Barcinas has the sixth highest vote among living candidates for Precinct 3 as we approach the organizational session of the 21st Legislature.

The only guidance to be found in the election law is 1 CMC § 6524(c), which states in relevant part: "In the case of any office where more than one candidate is to be elected, the candidates receiving the highest number of votes, from greatest to least, shall be declared the winning candidates."

Only a living candidate can assume office. Applying the principle of 1 CMC § 6524(c) to the remaining living candidates requires that Rep. Donald Barcinas be presumptively considered entitled to a Precinct 3 House seat in the 21st Legislature. Importantly, there is no good reason to refuse to so, and respect for both the rule of law and the voice of the people demands that he be so recognized.

Rep. Donald Barcinas has a legitimate claim to a seat in the 21st Commonwealth House of Representatives, and only the 21st House, in its organizational session, can judge his election and qualifications and decide whether or not to seat him. That is the bottom line.

It is further to be noted that this kind of issue has already been addressed in 1990 by the Commonwealth Supreme Court in Mafnas v. Inos, 1 N.M.I. 101 (1990). Although not directly on point, there is much in Mafnas v. Inos that is instructive in answering the present question.

And Mafnas v. Inos is not the only case pertinent to the question at hand. "Under the Constitution only the Legislature has the power to seat its members, and only if the Legislature delegates some or all of its power to the courts do we obtain the jurisdiction to determine contested legislative elections." Manglona v. Benavente, 829 F.2d 899 (9th Cir. 1987).

In my view, there is no conceivable legitimate justification for the members-elect of the 21st House of Representatives to disregard the expressed views of the voters of Precinct 3 and refuse to seat Rep. Barcinas and instead deny him (and those who voted for him) the seat by declaring a vacancy and paving the way for a special election in which it would be, in the apt title of the Saipan Tribune, "open season" and a free-for-all for any resident of Precinct 3 to try to grab the seat away from him. It also would be a grotesque waste of taxpayers' money.

Additionally, it is premature to be talking about a special election when the legal basis to conduct one is yet to be established. Pursuant to 1 CMC § 6502(a), special elections to fill vacancies take place only upon the call of the governor. The governor so far has not called one (or attempted to call one). And since there is at this time no vacancy to fill, the governor is presently powerless to call a special election, no matter what he thinks would be desirable to try to keep Rep. Donald Barcinas out of the 21st House.

Assistant attorneys general and reporters should be more careful about the potential for confusing and misleading the public.

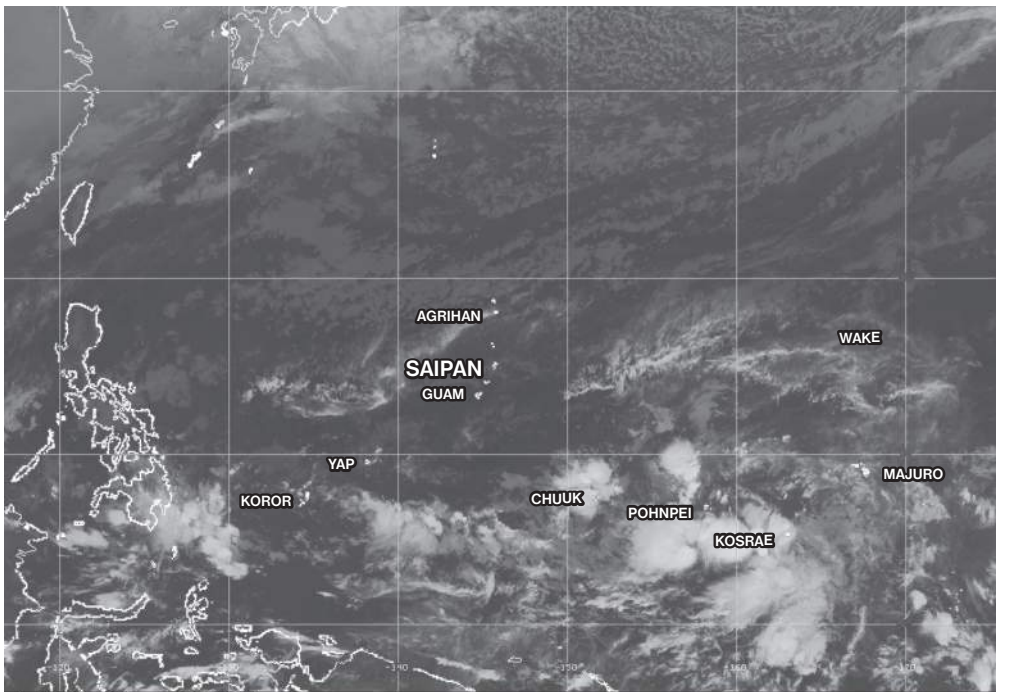
Stephen C. Woodruff
Senate legal counsel in the 9th, 10th,11th, and 12th Legislatures

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.
89° 77°	89° 77°	88° 77°	88° 77°	88° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:00 AM, SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 2019
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

The forecast remains much the same, with isolated showers and northeast trades the next few days. The passage south of Guam of what was once TD 01W will bring isolated thunderstorms to the region Wednesday night and Thursday. Winds will increase slightly Tuesday and Wednesday as low pressure to the south tightens the pressure gradient.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Windy	85° / 77°
Palau	Showers	83° / 77°
Yap	Cloudy	85° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 80°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	73° / 63°
Beijing	Sunny	36° / 18°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	72° / 64°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81° / 69°
London	Partly Cloudy	62° / 51°
Los Angeles	Rain	66° / 52°
Manila	Mostly Sunny	86° / 73°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	93° / 72°
Miami	Sunny	76° / 57°
New York	Partly Cloudy	35° / 25°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	54° / 37°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	46° / 37°
Busan	Mostly Cloudy	45° / 25°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55° / 36°
Salem	Cloudy	51° / 35°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	57° / 50°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	30° / 14°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	55° / 39°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	36° / 24°

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:27 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.35
06:44 AM	LOW TIDE	0.55
1:28 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.84
8:29 PM	LOW TIDE	0.64

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:46 AM	6:05 PM
Tuesday	6:46 AM	6:05 PM
Wednesday	6:46 AM	6:06 PM
Thursday	6:46 AM	6:07 PM
Friday	6:46 AM	6:07 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	12:07 AM	-	-
Tuesday	-	12:39 AM	12:47 PM
Wednesday	-	1:30 AM	1:30 PM
Thursday	-	2:25 AM	2:16 PM
Friday	-	3:22 AM	3:08 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 20, 2018

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily
UA105	4:45pm	5:25pm	2, 4

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:15am	6:30am	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED:

TW9308	1:10am	4:10am	3, 4
TW308	1:35am	5:20am	Daily
TW9308	3:20am	6:30am	2
TW9308	3:25am	6:30am	5
7C3403	4:35am	8:25am	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U86486:10am		8:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

JD396	7:30am	11:00am	1
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:30am	7:55am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:15am	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA117/183 via GUM	9:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA117/193 GUM-ROR	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via
UA105/183	4:45pm	9:40pm	2 via GUM
UA105/183	4:45pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	1:50am	5:15am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7
UA117/159	9:15am	11:00pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via GUM
UA105/159	4:45pm	11:00pm	2, 4 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA104	3:00pm	3:41pm	2, 4

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35pm	2:00am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3452	10:05pm	2:00am+1	1

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED:

TW9307	6:30pm	12:10am+1	2, 3
TW307	7:00pm	12:35am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
TW307	7:05pm	12:35am+1	1
TW9307	9:00pm	2:20am+1	1
TW9307	9:05pm	:25am+1	4
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:20pm	4:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD395	9:35pm	5:00am+1	7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:55pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA182/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
PR110/UA174	10:05pm	8:11am+1	Daily via GUM
UA192/174	10:30pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:15pm	12:15am+1	3, 7
UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
UA116/174	11:45pm	8:11am+1	2, 4 via GUM
UA116/174	11:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, PR PAL Express; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The* Saipan Tribune *is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Hundreds of FEMA contractors ordered to stop work

By AARON GREGG
THE WASHINGTON POST

Hundreds of government contractors who were engaged in disaster preparedness work for the Federal Emergency Management Agency were ordered two weeks ago to stop work on projects, raising concerns about whether the protracted government shutdown is straining the agency's ability to respond to future disasters.

FEMA emergency funds designated for current disaster response have not been affected by the shutdown, meaning current disaster recovery efforts in Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico should continue despite the partial shutdown, the agency said Thursday.

But on Dec. 26, FEMA ordered hundreds of contractors to halt work on outstanding government contracts, withholding payments for disaster planning work such as flood mapping, government administrative functions like contract management support, and facilities maintenance work.

"Any work done after the receipt of this notice is at your own risk and will not be reimbursed," FEMA's head of contracting activity, Bobby McCane, wrote in an advisory to contractors.

The agency also temporarily stopped processing flood insurance applications over the holidays, though it resumed doing so after criticism from lawmakers and housing industry representatives.

FEMA spokeswoman Elizabeth Litzow said no current disaster response projects are being put on hold because of the partial shutdown. The agency is not processing new disaster declaration requests unless it would be likely to "compromise the safety of life or protection or property," Litzow said, in which case the request would move forward despite the partial shutdown.

"FEMA programs and services currently operating, including emergency work as well as public infrastructure and mitigation projects, will not be impacted if the shutdown continues throughout this week," Litzow wrote in an email. "There are no disaster projects on hold presently, and we are not aware of any that will have to be put on hold in the near future."

The White House did not respond to a request for comment on whether the shutdown could hurt FEMA's preparedness for a future disaster.

In a Wednesday tweet, President Donald Trump threatened to withhold FEMA aid as a way to punish California over what he called a "disgraceful situation" with its recent forest fires.

"Millions of dollars are sent to the State of California for Forest fires that, with proper Forest management, would never happen," the president tweeted. "Unless they get their act together, which is not likely, I have ordered FEMA to send no more money. It is a disgraceful situation in lives and money!"

FEMA's now-rescinded decision to halt flood insurance operations drew the ire of lawmakers and the housing industry. In a Dec. 26 notice, FEMA noted that the agency's funding for the National Flood Insurance Program expired on Dec. 22, noting that flood insurers are not allowed to collect premiums for issuing or renewing flood insurance policies.

Rep. Maxine Waters, D-California, called FEMA's cancellation of flood insurance a "harmful and incorrect interpretation of its authority," urging the agency to resume its flood insurance work. Representatives from the housing and banking industries have also pushed back on FEMA's decision, saying the shutdown could hurt housing markets in coastal communities.

The agency later rescinded its decision on flood insurance, saying it would process flood insurance applications despite the shutdown.

Even before Trump's admonishment, the shutdown had been taking a sharp toll on the businesses that support FEMA's operations. Alan Chvotkin, executive vice president and counsel with the government contractors' trade group Professional Services Council, said the shutdown threatens to damage the industry of disaster preparedness and response professionals who contract with FEMA.

"Companies are naturally going to do what they can to protect their employees, but it's hard to keep them on idle standby waiting to be recalled," Chvotkin said. "The longer the shutdown goes, the more difficult it is to reassemble these teams."

The companies affected by the FEMA shutdown include those engaged in Hurricane recovery work across the country, though FEMA says no current emergency work is on hold because of the shutdown.

Among the hundreds of contractors ordered to stop work, many are working to prepare for future disasters.

Researchers at the University of Mississippi and Texas A&M have seen funding lapses for regional flood mapping and disaster preparedness work. A company called Apprio has been ordered to halt work on a $28 million contract to provide training support services.

HME, a Tennessee-based small business that works with FEMA, has been ordered to halt facilities maintenance for government buildings in Anniston, Alabama. The company serves FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness, a government office that coordinates training. An HME representative declined to comment.

FEMA ordered contractors to halt work on a $16 million contract for engineering support services in relation to Hurricane Maria, awarded to a company called NISTAC, a joint venture of the engineering companies Dewberry and AECOM. A Dewberry representative said the shutdown does not affect the company's work on that contract, despite the FEMA stop work order; the representative declined to elaborate.

And FEMA halted contracts for three mobile-home manufacturers: Lexington Homes, American Homestar Corporation and CMH Manufacturing. The companies hold open-ended contracts that FEMA can use to quickly procure mobile homes in the event of a future disaster.

Craig Fugate, a former FEMA administrator, said stopping work on those contracts would not affect people living in FEMA-provided mobile homes. But the stop-work orders could chip away at FEMA's ability to quickly respond to a future disaster, he said.

"This is one of the side effects of the shutdown, is its limiting FEMA's ability to have contracts in place for future disasters," Fugate said.

FEMA staffers deployed to current disaster areas say the work goes on despite the standoff in Washington.

One of them is Victor Inge, a FEMA public information officer deployed in Saipan, a Pacific island in the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. commonwealth. The agency is working to provide new housing for survivors of Super Typhoon Yutu, a powerful storm that devastated parts of the Mariana Islands in mid-November.

Inge says his staff will continue its current housing mission despite some recent furloughs.

"Some of our staff are among those being furloughed, but we're out here still working and we'll continue to do so until somebody taps us on the shoulder and tells us to stop," Inge said. "I hope that doesn't happen because if it does it would leave a lot of people hanging."

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A warm and sincere
Congratulations
to all the newly elected officials of our beloved Commonwealth.
May your time in office be blessed with many opportunities to better the lives of our people all the more.
From the staff and management of
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TO Fabulous
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SAIPAN
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Russia dismisses reports of prisoner swap with US

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia's Foreign Ministry on Friday dismissed suggestions that an American arrested in Moscow on suspicion of spying could be used in a prisoner swap for a Russian held in the United States.

Paul Whelan, a former U.S. Marine, was arrested in Moscow last month on suspicion of espionage. Whelan's arrest raised speculation that he could be swapped for one of the Russians held in the U.S. such as gun rights activist Maria Butina, who has pleaded guilty to acting as a foreign agent in the U.S.

But Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said at a briefing that Whelan is accused of espionage and will face trial.

"At the current stage, there is no talk about any sort of exchange," she said, dismissing a possible swap as "speculations and fakes."

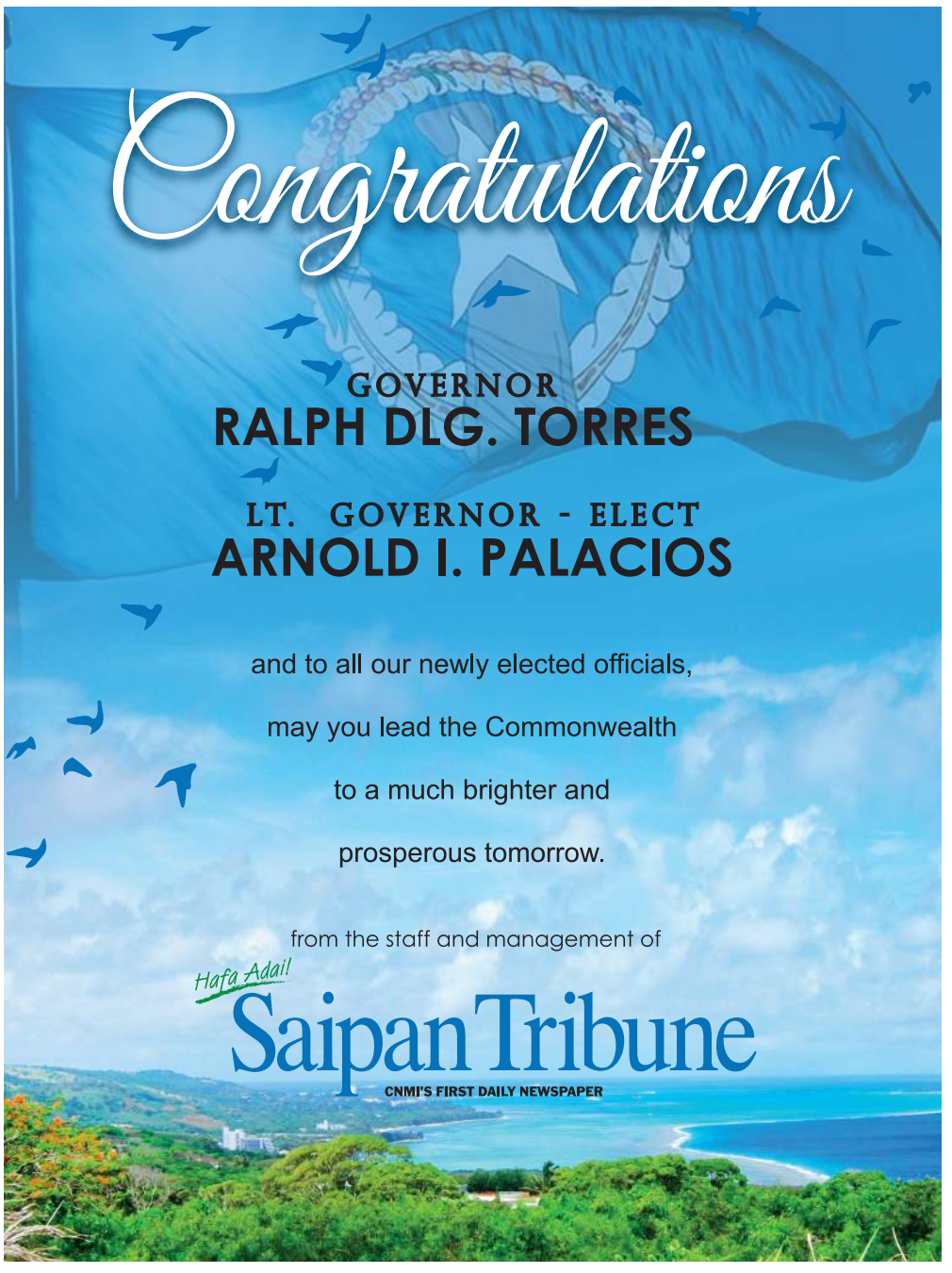
Zakharova also said Russia would allow diplomats from Britain, Ireland and Canada as well as the U.S. to visit Whelan, who holds four citizenships.

Yevgeny Yenikeyev, a prisoner rights activist, told the Interfax news agency he visited Moscow's Lefortovo Prison, where Whelan is being held. He said Whelan's cell was recently repaired and has hot water, a toilet and a TV.

But Yenikeyev said prison officials didn't let him or other activists see or talk to Whelan, saying that authorities said he doesn't speak Russian and they could not monitor a conversation in English. He said the activists will try to visit Whelan again.

Releasing of Philippine passports

The Philippine Consulate General in Guam, in coordination with the Office of Honorary Consul Eli Arago, will be releasing passports to those who applied to renew their passports last Nov. 14, 15, and 16, 2018. Pick up the new passports at Finasisu Terraces Apartment Bldg D, second floor, at the unit atop the Mini-Mart Store, Monday-Friday 9am-5pm (12pm-1pm breaktime). Bring your old passport and receipt. If someone will pick it up for you, provide an authorization letter from the applicant/s. For any inquiry or details call Mel Santos at 233-6293. ***(PR)***



Congratulations
to all new leaders of this great Commonwealth and may you all be blessed with wisdom and goodwill as your journey into public service gets underway today.
From the Management & Staff of
HERMAN'S
MODERN
BAKERY
& Tan Marikita's Cafe

Congratulations

To the Honorable Ralph DLG. Torres
the Governor of CNMI
& the Honorable Arnold I. Palacios
the Lt.Governor of CNMI

E-Land Group and MRI would like to extend our warmest congratulations
on your inauguration as Governor and Lt. Governor
of Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
We sincerely wish the success and prosperous future of your administration.

Matthew Park
CEO/ President of MRI

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Seabee shares common bond with grandpa 74 years later

By SGT. 1ST CLASS WYNNFRED HOKE
8TH THEATER SUSTAINMENT COMMAND

A little more than 74 years ago, Seabees fought alongside U.S. Marines in the battle for the Marana Islands chain. Fast forward to today, Seabees are now fighting a different battle on the same island they liberated in August 1944.

Super Typhoon Yutu, a category-5 cyclone, made landfall on the Northern Mariana Islands on Oct. 25, 2018, causing devastating damage. Soon after, U.S Navy Seabees were deployed to Rota and Tinian to aid in the immediate life-saving search and rescue operations that where taking place.

Now that a few months have passed, operations have moved to mitigating property damage and repairing roofs. Residents of Tinian continue to look forward to the Seabees' help in getting back to a sense of normalcy like they had before Yutu.

For one Seabee, being on Tinian in support of the recovery efforts has a special, personal significance.

SGT. 1ST CLASS WYNN HOKE
Chief construction mechanic Robin Nicely with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 drives a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle on the roads of Tinian while surveying the damage.

"My grandfather participated in the invasion of Saipan and Tinian during World War II," said, chief construction mechanic Robin Nicely with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3. "Seabees run deep within my family; just like my grandfather who was a Seabee who hit the beaches of Tinian, I am proud to continue the Nicely legacy as a Seabee serving [on] Tinian today, this time in support of disaster relief."

When Nicely found out that he was going to Tinian in support of recovery efforts, he called his grandfather and relayed the news. Both were excited to share a place where there is a deep history of Seabee pride.

Nicely has only been on the island for a few days but has noticed how generous and kind the people of Tinian are.

"With Yutu hitting the island and causing so much devastation, the Seabees being here helps the community out with our ability to fix roofs and clean up debris and they are really appreciative of us being here, helping them get back to normal," said Nicely.

While surveying the island, Nicely couldn't help but think about his grandfather and how life was back when the island was a major U.S. military hub during World War II.

"It is amazing when I drive the roads [on Tinian] and think about the 40,000 American troops on this island 70-plus years ago, and to look at the island and see the changes and try to imagine Broadway—the main street of the island—just packed with people," said Nicely. "As I drive down the street, I look at the memorials that are out there and it is pretty amazing how we circle back in the history of this place."

Nicely, and his fellow Seabees here with him are excited and eager to get to work helping Tinian recover from Super Typhoon Yutu. "As the oncoming Seabee battalion, we are excited to come out here and help and take over for NMCB 1 and finish the work," said Nicely. "Thank you to the people of Tinian for being so welcoming, nice and awesome to us."

When Nicely returns home, he plans to share more of his experiences with his grandfather and talk about how Tinian was and how it is, but most importantly how they now share a common experience as Seabees serving on this special island of historic significance.

NMCB-3 is forward deployed throughout the Indo-Pacific region and United States ready to support major combat operations, theater security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. Seabees provide general engineering and civil support to Navy, Marine Corps and Joint operational forces globally.

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Rotary selects officers for 2020

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Rotary Club of Saipan announced that a brand-new set of officers to serve for the Rotarian Year 2019 through 2020 has been elected.

Rotary president Greg Borja told members last Tuesday that the club's selection of officers has officially ended with Rotary president-elect Sonya Dancoe as the club's 2019-2020 president.

For the first time in three years, current vice president Brian Clayton would be stepping down from his position and will become the club's Community Service director.

In Clayton's stead, Sean Ficke was elected 2019-2020 club vice president.

Tatiana Babauta was elected club secretary, Dave Guerrero was re-elected treasurer, and Curtis Dancoe was elected sergeant-at-arms.

Frank Celis was elected Club Service director, while Ivan Ilmov was elected New Generations director, Yosh Gabaldon is now the Vocational Service director, Borja is international service director, and Nelson Krum is the Rotary Foundation director.

The elections were done last Dec. 18, 2018.

In an interview, Borja noted that the new officers are a highly motivated group.

"The officers and directors are very motivated Rotarians. A lot of them have been with the club for a while, so it is a great opportunity to take advantage of their leadership," he said.

According to Borja, the club selects its officers one year in advance to allow them to prepare for a year's worth of service.

Marcia Ayuyu, the 2018-2019 club president, would officially be starting her term in July 2019, leaving Borja with only six months left on his term.

"The Rotary year starts every July 1, so we would have our inauguration night at around that weekend," he noted.

The Rotary traditionally meets every Tuesday at the Giovanni's of Hyatt Regency Saipan and features a guest speaker.

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Nation

AS WORKERS MISS PAYCHECKS

Shutdown set to hit record length

WASHINGTON (AP)—The partial government shutdown was on track Friday to become the longest closure in U.S. history as President Donald Trump and nervous Republicans scrambled to find a way out of the mess. A solution couldn't come soon enough for federal workers who got pay statements Friday but no pay.

The House and Senate voted to give federal workers back pay whenever the federal government reopens and then left town for the weekend, leaving the shutdown on track to become one for the record books once the clock struck midnight and the closure entered its 22nd day. And while Trump privately considered one dramatic escape route—declaring a national emergency to build the wall without a new stream of cash from Congress—members of his own party were fiercely debating that idea, and the president urged Congress to come up with another solution.

"What we're not looking to do right now is national emergency," Trump said. He insisted that he had the authority to do that, adding that he's "not going to do it so fast" because he'd still prefer to work a deal with Congress.

About 800,000 workers missed paychecks Friday, many receiving blank pay statements. Some posted photos of their empty earnings statements on social media as a rallying cry to end the shutdown, a jarring image that many in the White House feared could turn more voters against the president as he holds out for billions in new wall funding.

With polls showing Trump getting most of the blame for the shutdown, the administration accelerated planning for a possible emergency declaration to try to get around Congress and fund the wall from existing sources of federal revenue. The White House explored diverting money for wall construction from a range of other accounts. One idea being considered was diverting some of the $13.9 billion allocated to the Army Corps of Engineers after last year's deadly hurricanes and floods.

That option triggered an outcry from officials in Puerto Rico and some states recovering from natural disasters, and appeared to lose steam on Friday.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom called it an "unconscionable" idea to look at using disaster assistance "to pay for an immoral wall that America doesn't need or want."

Republican Rep. Kevin Brady of Texas told reporters after discussions with the White House: "I feel confident disaster relief dollars will not be tapped." Brady said the administration was looking at the "breadth" of unspent dollars in other government accounts.

Other possibilities included tapping asset forfeiture funds, including money seized by the Department of Justice from drug kingpins, according to a congressional Republican not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations. The White House also was eyeing military construction funds, another politically difficult choice because the money would be diverted from a backlog of hundreds of projects at bases around the nation.

Despite Trump's go-slow message, momentum grew in some corners for some sort of emergency declaration. Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who met with the president on Friday, took to Twitter afterward to urge: "Mr. President, Declare a national emergency NOW. Build a wall NOW."

Trump has been counseled by outside advisers to move toward a national emergency declaration, but many in the White House are trying to pump the brakes. Senior aide Jared Kushner, who traveled with the president to the Texas border on Thursday, was among those opposed to the declaration, arguing to the president that pursuing a broader immigration deal was a better option. A person familiar with White House thinking said that in meetings this week, the message was that the administration is in no rush and wants to consider various options. The person was unauthorized to discuss private sessions and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Judge: Women would lose birth control coverage under rules

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—A "substantial number" of women would lose birth control coverage under new rules by the Trump administration that allow more employers to opt out of providing the benefit, a U.S. judge said at a hearing on Friday.

Judge Haywood Gilliam appeared inclined to grant a request by California and other states that he block the rules while the states' lawsuit moves forward. He said he would rule before Monday, when the rules are set to take effect.

The changes would allow more employers, including publicly traded companies, to opt out of providing no-cost contraceptive coverage to women by claiming religious objections. Some private employers could also object on moral grounds.

Gilliam said the new rules would be a "massive policy shift" to women who lose coverage. The judge previously blocked an interim version of the rules—a decision that was upheld in December by an appeals court.

The case is before him again after the administration finalized the measures in November, prompting a renewed legal challenge by California and other states. Twelve other states, including New York and North Carolina, along with Washington, D.C., have joined California in the lawsuit.

At issue is a requirement under President Barack Obama's health care law that birth control services be covered at no additional cost. Obama officials included exemptions for religious organizations and some businesses. The Trump administration expanded those exemptions and added "moral convictions" as a basis to opt out of providing birth control services.

Karli Eisenberg, an attorney for California, told Gilliam Friday the loss of free contraceptive coverage from employers would force women to turn to government programs that provide birth control, and if they are ineligible for those, increase the risk of unintended pregnancies.

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World

Saudi woman fleeing alleged abuse heads for asylum in Canada

BANGKOK (AP)—An 18-year-old Saudi woman who said she was abused by her family and feared for her life if deported back home left Thailand on Friday night for Canada, which has granted her asylum, officials said.

The fast-moving developments capped an eventful week for Rahaf Mohammed Alqunun. She fled her family while visiting Kuwait and flew to Bangkok, where she barricaded herself in an airport hotel to avoid deportation and grabbed global attention by mounting a social media campaign for asylum.

Her case highlighted the cause of women's rights in Saudi Arabia, where several women fleeing abuse by their families have been caught trying to seek asylum abroad in recent years and returned home. Human rights activists say many similar cases go unreported.

Alqunun is flying to Toronto via Seoul, South Korea, according to Thai immigration Police Chief Surachate Hakparn. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau confirmed his country had granted her asylum.

"That is something that we are pleased to do because Canada is a country that understands how important it is to stand up for human rights and to stand up for woman's rights around the world and I can confirm that we have accepted the U.N.'s request," Trudeau said.

Several other countries, including Australia, had been in talks with the U.N.'s refugee agency to accept Alqunun, Surachate said earlier in the day.

"She chose Canada. It's her personal decision," he said.

Canada's ambassador had seen her off at the airport, Surachate said, adding that she looked happy and healthy.

She thanked everyone for helping her, he said, and added that the first thing she would do upon arrival in Canada would be to start learning the language. She already speaks more than passable English, in addition to Arabic.

The office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees welcomed Canada's decision.

Maduro foe says he's ready to replace the president

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—The head of Venezuela's opposition-run congress said Friday that he is prepared to step into the nation's presidency temporarily to replace Nicolas Maduro, whose inauguration has been rejected as illegitimate by most countries in the hemisphere.

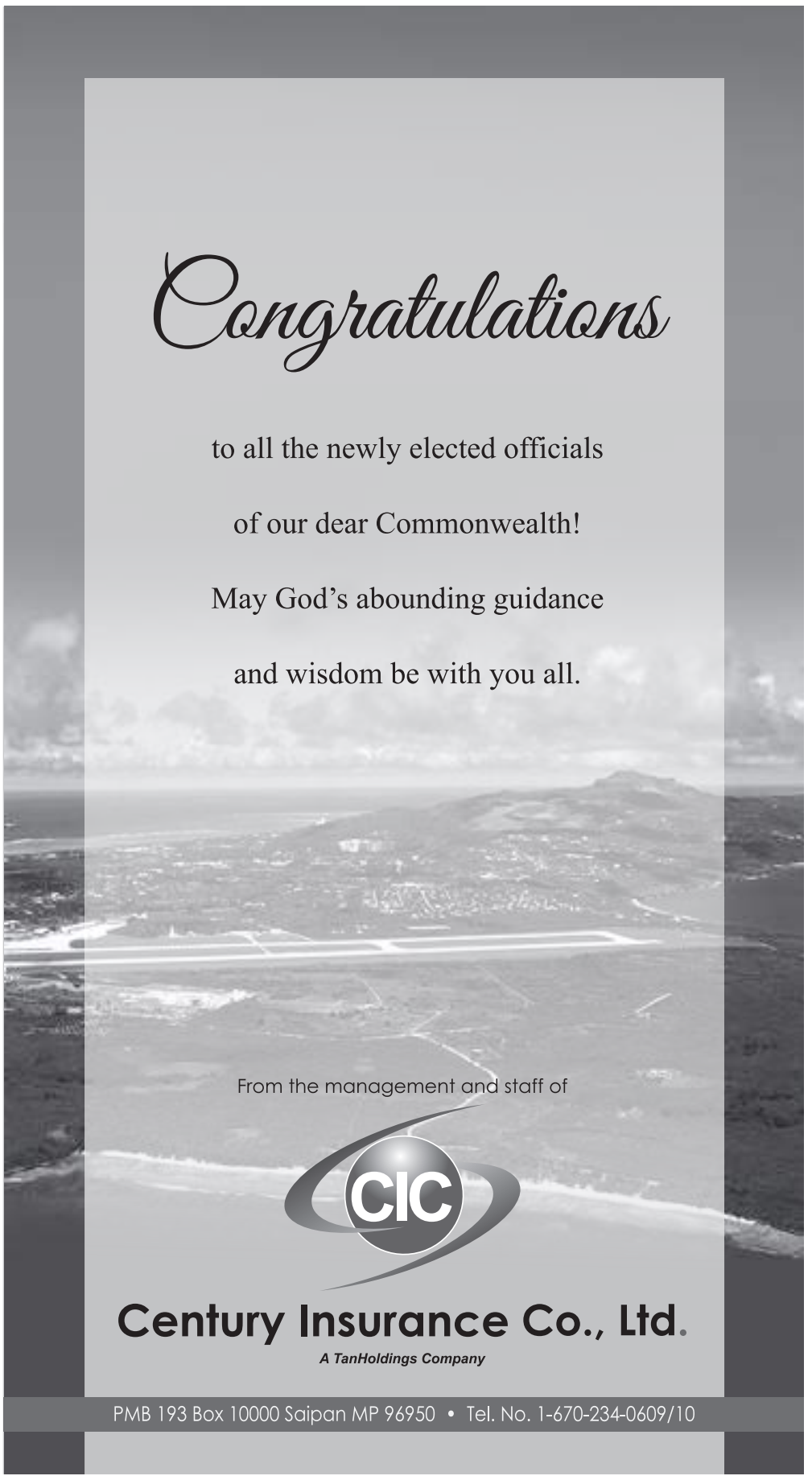
National Assembly President Juan Guaido made the statement to an energized crowd blocking a busy Caracas street a day after Maduro's inauguration to a second term.

"Guaido for president!" the crowd chanted. "Out with Maduro!"

But Guaido said he would need support from the public, the armed forces and the international community before trying to form a transitional government to hold new elections to replace Maduro.

"The constitution gives me the legitimacy to carry out the charge of the presidency over the country to call elections," Guaido said. "But I need backing from the citizens to make it a reality."

The head of the Organization of American States, Secretary-General Luis Almagro, wasn't waiting. He sent out a tweet recognizing Guaido as Venezuela's interim president. "You have our support," Almagro said in a tweet.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PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

COMBINED NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Governor
Saipan, MP 96950 • Tel: (670) 237-2200 or (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS
On or after February 04, 2019, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Honolulu Field Office, for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383), as amended, to undertake the following projects and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
Koblerville Youth Learning Center Expansion and Enhancement Project	Rehabilitation of the existing building and expand the building. The expansion includes a multi-purpose hall, stage, dressing rooms, restrooms, storage room, electrical room, pump room, generator room, water tank, and parking spaces.	Koblerville Saipan	$435,370.00

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Central Office in Garapan, Saipan and may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
Any individual, group or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the projects may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 or direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan. All comments received by January 21, 2019, will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commentors should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS
The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD Honolulu Field Office that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Acting Governor Victor B. Hocog consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS
The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of fifteen days following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Honolulu Field Office, 1132 Bishop Street, Suite 1400, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96813. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/ Victor B. Hocog
Acting Governor

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Health & Wellness

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WEIGHT LOSS:

How to keep off the pounds for good

By KAREN D'SOUZA
THE MERCURY NEWS

The holidays are over and as the fog of egg nog, gingerbread and candy canes begins to lift, many people find themselves confronting the harsh reality of the bathroom scale.

Now is the time to put down the champagne flute, sweep up the tinsel and start thinking about healthy living and New Year's resolutions. One of the most passionate topics is always weight loss, not just how to shed a few pounds fast but how to take off the extra weight and keep it off for good. If you have been over indulging since Halloween saddled you with extra bags of candy, you might want to start taking stock of your jingle belly.

The trick is to address core issues, experts say, rather than lose weight fast only to let the pounds creep right back on. This is not about a trendy cleanse or quick fix diet you will have forgotten about come Valentine's Day. So think beyond those apple cider vinegar shots you've heard of to make lasting changes.

"A lot of diets can help you lose weight but the hard part is finding a diet you can stick to over the long haul," says Dr. John Morton, chief of Bariatric surgery at Stanford Health Care. "That's the real challenge. Can you maintain the weight loss over time?"

Discipline was always the sticking point for Robert Brandyberry. The San Jose resident says he could barely get himself to plow through one workout at his previous weight of 433 pounds. But now, 28 weeks into his latest diet and workout plan, which he learned from the coaches at San Jose's Achievement Fitness Center, he has lost a whopping 136 pounds. He went from having high blood pressure and borderline diabetes to a clean bill of health.

"Before when I got stressed out, I lost myself in cheeseburgers and Mountain Dew because food never talks back," he says. "Now I go to the gym and get rid of the stress that way."

The diet is tough and the workouts grueling but he's determined to get to his goal (to have lost 200 pounds in the course of a year). He does a high-intensity workout twice a day, seven days a week. The first workout comes at 6:30 am, the second after a day's work. The man who used to get winded taking his 5-year-old to the park and who struggled to tie his shoes is now a gym rat.

"When I first started my whole body hurt and I could barely walk. I needed a bench just to get up off the floor," he says, "But I had to check my ego at the door and just suck it up."

Changing the way he eats has been key to winning the battle of the bulge.

"I follow a high protein, low carb diet. No sugars and very, very low sodium. I drink well over a gallon of water a day," says Brandyberry, 44. "The diet is hard to stick to. It takes a lot of mental power that I didn't have before. The lifestyle changes I have made are for good."

Social media has played a huge role in keeping him on track.

"Before I had no accountability. I'd say 'I will start soon' and that passed," he says. "Now I have the best support system with my friends. They comment on my Facebook posts with so much positive energy, it makes me want to keep going."

Meanwhile, slow and steady is the plan for Diana Crawford. She's been on the Jenny Craig program since 2016 and has whittled her weight down from 300 to 195, which has improved her quality of life immeasurably.

"I will have to eat the way I'm eating now for the rest of my life if I don't want to gain weight again," says the 64-year-old from Pinole, Calif. "Bodies are funny and mine is funnier than most in that it will try to take me back to my highest weight."

For John Manoj Vastrad, the motivation to make a lasting change and keep pushing himself was more emotional. After getting a divorce from his wife of 18 years, back in 2013, he went through a dark period and fitness was the light at the end of the tunnel.

"After going through an initial bleak period, I had a lot time on my hands and I was also between jobs," says the 46-year-old from Fremont. He filled the void with a workout regiment worthy of a triathlete. "I started with 100 push ups, 100 squats, 200 bicycle crunches, 50 pull ups every alternate day and I peaked at 250 push ups, 150 squats, 300 bicycle crunches and 65 pull ups every alternate day."

To top it off, he also tried to go hiking or biking almost every week. He has had moments of weakness, he admits, but he has always found a way to push through the wall of inertia. Knowing he has a family history of heart issues and diabetes is what keeps him going.

"It wasn't always easy and I still have to drag myself to workout but the after effects are better than any drug," he says. "By far the biggest motivator is just the wonderful feeling of being healthy and fit, free from illnesses, depression, aches and pains and stress. I would rather spend a few hours every week in the gym than in the doctor's waiting room or in a hospital."

From a doctor's perspective, Morton suggests that no matter what combination of diet and fitness plan you choose, you should try to follow some basic rules, such as eating some protein at breakfast, even if all you have time for is a little Greek yogurt or peanut butter, and trying to get some exercise. Every single day.

"That old adage about eating like a king at breakfast and a pauper at dinner turns out to be true," he says.

He also advises patients to exercise in between leaving work and coming home so that the activity can be a sort of emotional buffer zone that helps fight stress, which is one of the factors that causes people to overeat in the first place. Calming down and eating more mindfully may be crucial in combating the American obesity epidemic.

"Stress triggers cortisol, the fight-or-flight hormone in the body," says Morton, "and that makes your body fight even harder to hold onto those pounds."

Brandyberry admits there are obstacles but he remains resolved.

"You have to keep reminding yourself why you are doing it," he says. "For me, I could care less about looking good at the beach. I just want to be here for my kids, you know?"

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Source: Your Guide to Walking, by Wendy Bumgardner
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Paul Trap

Life & Style

Lawyer: R. Kelly denies all sexual misconduct allegations

CHICAGO (AP)—An attorney for R. Kelly said Friday that the R&B star denies all allegations of sexual misconduct involving women and underage girls, including those made in a recent documentary, although he says neither he nor Kelly has watched the entire movie.

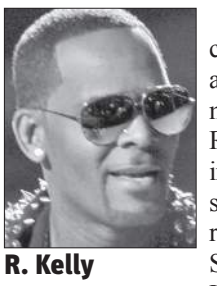
Attorney Steve Greenberg offered his most full-throated defense of the Grammy-winning recording artist since a prosecutor in Chicago this week urged potential victims to come forward after Lifetime aired the documentary "Surviving R Kelly," which revisited old allegations and brought new ones into the light.

The scrutiny also extends to Georgia, where an Atlanta-area couple said Georgia prosecutors have reached out to them after they repeatedly said that Kelly brainwashed their daughter and kept her from contacting them.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Greenberg portrayed Kelly, one of the top-selling recording artists of all time, as a victim of a television hit piece.

"The allegations aren't true because he never knowingly had sex with an underage woman, he never forced anyone to do anything, he never held anyone captive, he never abused anyone," said Greenberg.

"Surviving R. Kelly" follows the BBC's "R Kelly: Sex, Girls & Videotapes," which was released last year. It alleged that the singer was holding women against their will and running a "sex cult."


R. Kelly

Activists from the #MeToo and #MuteRKelly social media movements have seized on the renewed attention to call for streaming services to drop Kelly's music and promoters not to book any more concerts. Kelly's estranged daughter, Joann Kelly, whose stage name is Buku Abi, called him a "monster" in a post on Instagram on Thursday, though she did not make any allegations.

Greenberg harshly criticized Lifetime, accusing those who made "Surviving R. Kelly" of telling women what to say on camera, and ripped Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx for asking potential victims to come forward, saying that "invites wrongful accusations." Lifetime did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Foxx's office said in a brief statement Friday that people have contacted prosecutors and that authorities are "following up on these calls."

Even as he denied the allegations, Greenberg said he didn't know details about them. He asserted that in the past women have "come on to" Kelly in the hopes that he could help them in their own performing careers, then became "disgruntled" when their own careers stalled and issued false allegations.

He could not say whether Kelly, 52, ever met the women interviewed in the Lifetime show, "met them one night when he was drinking and partying" or even whether he might have lived with them. But he said that was not necessary to determine that they lied, noting that none of them ever went to police or presented anyone with evidence of physical abuse.

Police: Driver crashes trying 'Bird Box' blindfold challenge

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Police say a Utah teenager crashed into another car when she covered her eyes as part of the so-called "Bird Box Challenge."

Layton police Lt. Travis Lyman said Friday that the 17-year-old drifted into oncoming traffic and hit another car after she pulled a hat over her eyes to emulate "Bird Box," a Sandra Bullock movie on Netflix where characters must be constantly blindfolded to avoid visions that urge them to die.

Videos of people trying to do things while blindfolded have attracted widespread attention online, and Netflix tweeted a warning about the challenge last week.

No one was hurt in the Monday crash north of Salt Lake City.

Lyman says it should serve as a warning he never thought he'd have to give: Don't drive while blindfolded.

Tim Tebow announces engagement to former Miss Universe

MIAMI (AP) — Tim Tebow is engaged.

Tebow

The Heisman Trophy winner announced his engagement on Instagram Thursday to Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters, a South Africa native and the 2017 Miss Universe.

The 31-year-old Tebow posted photos of himself down on one knee and 23-year-old Nel-Peters wearing an engagement ring.

Tebow quarterbacked Florida to national championships during the 2006 and 2008 seasons. He was drafted in 2010 by the Denver Broncos, where he played two seasons. He also played for the New York Jets in 2012.

Tebow currently plays professional baseball in the New York Mets organization. He also is a college football analyst for the SEC Network.

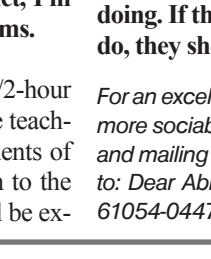
Humble Pacific island movie star Mungau Dain dies in mid-20s

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Mungau Dain had never considered acting before he starred in the Oscar-nominated film "Tanna." He got the role because his elders decided he was the best-looking guy in their traditional village on the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu.

They would later describe him as their answer to Brad Pitt.

Dain died Saturday in the capital Port Vila, after contracting a leg infection that wasn't quickly treated. He was in his mid-20s.

Martin Butler, who co-directed "Tanna," said Dain wasn't a natural actor but was very enthusiastic, learned quickly, and ended up giving a fabulous performance. The 2015 movie won a number of awards, including two at the Venice Film Festival, and was nominated for an Academy Award for best foreign language film.


Dain

Dain is survived by his wife, Nancy, and two children. His village, Yakel, on Tanna island, remains in a traditional two-week mourning period.

Jimmy Joseph, the cultural director for Tanna island, said Dain was quiet, humble and respected in Yakel, where he had chosen to remain living even after achieving some fame in the movie. He said Dain never drank or smoke.

People in the village typically choose to live as they have for centuries, in simple thatch huts and wearing nothing but grass skirts or a penis shield called a nambas. They raise crops and pigs, and observe a traditional way of life known as kastom.

But the village isn't completely isolated from modern life. When villagers make the trek to the island's main town to sell the coffee beans they've grown or buy rice, they usually wear clothes. Some have cellphones, which they charge with small solar panels.

When Australia-based Butler and Bentley Dean decided to make the movie, which is loosely based on a true story, Butler said they quickly realized the village elders would be doing the casting. He said Dain looked too old for the role with his full beard, but 10 minutes later he'd shaved it off at their request.

He said he fondly remembers how awkward Dain was when trying to act in a scene in which he was supposed to lift co-star Marie Wawa in his arms and carry her along a river bed.

Butler said he and Dean plan to travel to Yakel at the end of the mourning period to join the village in celebrating Dain's life.

"I was totally devastated. He was so fit and young and gorgeous. His wife is fabulous and the kids are great," Butler said. "He was a great example of how you can live a totally different type of life, and still be completely happy."

Location producer Janita Suter, who lived in Yakel for seven months during filming with her husband, Dean, and their children, said if there was an award for most improved actor, it would have to go to Dain. She said she doesn't think he'd even seen a movie before acting in one.

Parents declare their freedom from ungrateful adult kids

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I raised two children —a son who is a successful doctor and a daughter who is a multipost-grad botanist. We are 72 now, in moderately failing health and very successful ourselves.

Our children were raised properly. We gave them all they would ever need to succeed and be happy. However, neither one is particularly interested in a loving relationship with us. Holidays together are strained.

Frankly, I'm quite sick of both of them. They are inconsiderate, insensitive and standoffish. We make no demands on either of them and never impose ourselves in any way. They never invite us to anything. We want to move away and disappear. What do you think?

ENOUGH ALREADY, IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR ENOUGH: People can disappear without physically moving away, as your children have already demonstrated. Have you tried asking them why they are so distant? Unless you do, nothing will change. Because holidays are strained, celebrate with those who appreciate you and whose company you enjoy.

DEAR ABBY: I invited a couple out for the husband's 60th birthday. We sat at the "chef's table" (in the front of the kitchen) and had amazing food and service. We all agreed it was a perfect evening.

I paid the bill and left a 25 percent tip on a $400 bill (for three people). The couple then proceeded to hand cash to the staff in spite of the fact that I had told them I had already tipped 25 percent, and they acknowledged that they knew it.

It was never my intention that they pay anything, and I was embarrassed. I felt like creeping out of the restaurant and never going back. Am I wrong to feel this way? Why wasn't my gift enough?

EMBARRASSED IN FLORIDA

DEAR EMBARRASSED: Your gift WAS enough, and obviously the birthday celebration was a success. Your guests were so impressed that they shared their pleasure with the staff. What they did was no reflection on you, and you should not allow it to discourage you from going back. In fact, I'm sure the establishment will welcome you with open arms.

DEAR ABBY: My sixth-grade grandson is in a 2 1/2-hour social studies class. He told me that during that time the teacher texts at least six times. I think this deprives the students of valuable instructional time. My daughter hasn't spoken to the principal about it—yet. I wonder when this concern will be expressed by other parents and discussed in your column.

TIME TO LEARN IN TEXAS

DEAR TIME TO LEARN: Has your daughter discussed this with the parents of the other students? If she hasn't, she should, because they may not be aware of what the teacher is doing. If they find it as concerning as you and your daughter do, they should approach the principal as a group.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

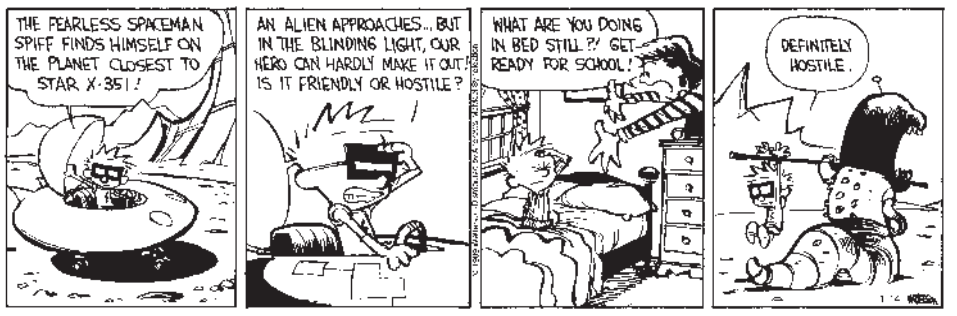
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

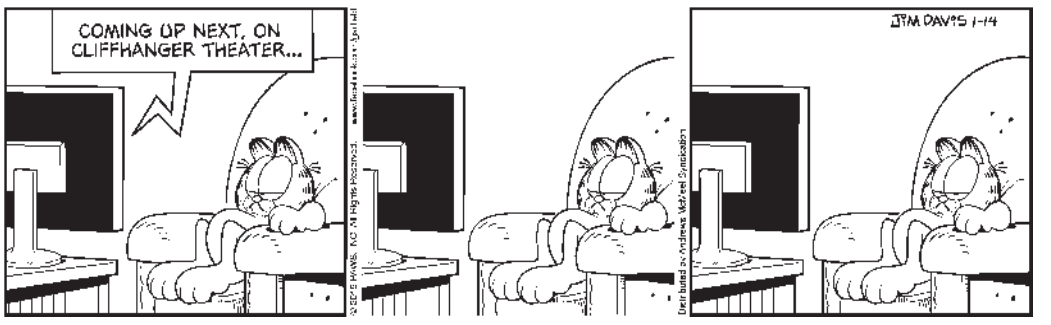
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


THE FEARLESS SPACEMAN SPIFF FINDS HIMSELF ON THE PLANET CLOSEST TO STAR X-351!
AN ALIEN APPROACHES... BUT IN THE BLINDING LIGHT, OUR HERO CAN HARDLY MAKE IT OUT! IS IT FRIENDLY OR HOSTILE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN BED STILL?! GET READY FOR SCHOOL!
DEFINITELY HOSTILE.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



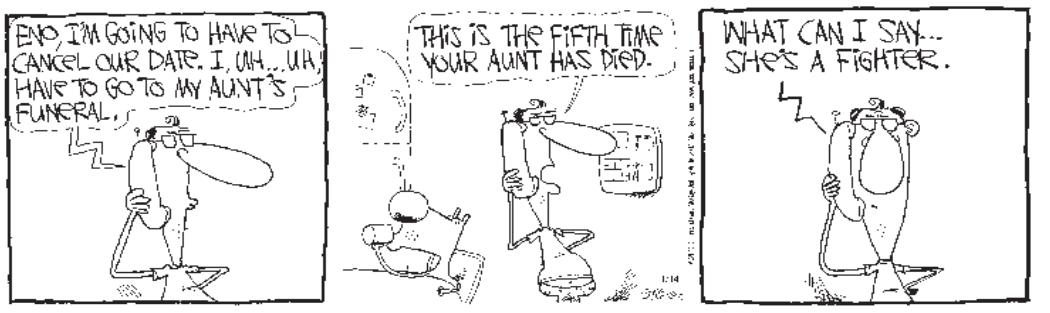
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WORK. WORK. WORK.
COME ON, ADAM. LET'S MAKE THIS YOUR MOST PRODUCTIVE YEAR YET.
LET'S PLAY ONE MORE GAME OF "SNEAKYBLOB" TO GET YOU GOING.
DINNER'S READY!
FETCH THE HOSE, CHILD! I CAN'T STOP!!

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


ENID, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO CANCEL OUR DATE. I, UH... UH, HAVE TO GO TO MY AUNT'S FUNERAL.
THIS IS THE FIFTH TIME YOUR AUNT HAS DIED.
WHAT CAN I SAY... SHE'S A FIGHTER.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

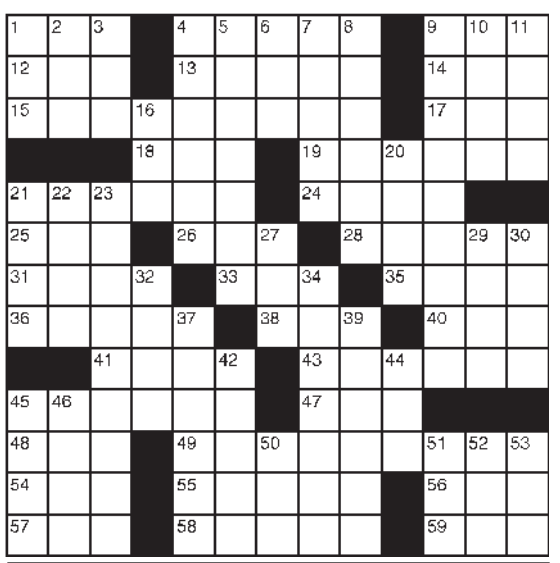
ACROSS
1 Actress Farrow
4 Carries
9 "Blue Bloods" network
12 Fireplace residue
13 WWII sub
14 "2001" computer
15 William and Kate's daughter
17 Lawyers' org.
18 Cato's 502
19 Noah's landfall
21 Summaries
24 Garr of "Tootsie"
25 Berliner's cry
26 Hog haven
28 Quartet doubled
31 Ella's style
33 Congeal
35 iPhone voice
36 King of Judea
38 Dazzle
40 Right angle
41 "I've Got — in Kalamazoo"
43 Sneaky sort
45 Secret matters
47 Request
48 Perched
49 Fraud
54 Candle count
55 Violin piece
56 Bird (Pref.)
57 Standard
58 Wimp
59 Poke

DOWN
1 Buddy
2 Somewhat (Suff.)
3 "Caught ya!"
4 Dutch exports
5 Woodwind players
6 Youngster
7 Really annoy
8 Sound system
9 Donor's beneficiaries
10 Rum cake
11 Venetian-blind part
16 Vitamin stat
20 Story lines
21 Impetuous
22 Caesar's "Behold!"
23 Role
27 Evergreen tree
29 Perry's creator
30 Cash drawer
32 Forum wear
34 In the direction of
37 Does the mambo
39 "Blade" actor Snipes
42 Christine of "Chicago Hope"
44 Alias abbr.
45 Now, in a memo
46 Sitar music
50 Ger. neighbor
51 Mahal preceder
52 Gardner of film
53 Pen tip

Solution time: 26 mins.

P	U	S		A	C	S		A	E	S	O	P
R	O	I		I	H	I		I	N	I	H	O
A	L	A		O	U	T	P	L	A	Y	E	D
N	I	L		P	I	E	R	S				
K	E	E	P		S	S	E		A	F	F	O
			I	F	F		P	A	R	I	O	R
C	O	R	E	D			H	O	O	D	S	
H	U	B	B	U	B		C	A	M			
E	R	I	E		R	E	A		A	W	E	D
			Z	E	B	R	A		O	H	H	
P	L	A	Y	E	D	O	U	T		N	P	A
A	I	R	E	R		N	S	A		K	E	G
T	E	M	P	O		Y	O	N		A	D	S

Last Friday's Answer 01-14



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Dave Grohl, 50; Jason Bateman, 50; LL Cool J, 51; Holland Taylor, 76.

Happy Birthday: Take your time, research, source out the best deal or move, and put your plans into motion with intelligence. A calculated approach to the changes you want to make this year will save you from making an unnecessary mistake. Offering suggestions and advice is one thing, but taking on responsibilities that don't belong to you will set you back. Your numbers are 3, 12, 21, 26, 32, 38, 47.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Putting your own spin on the way you do things may not please everyone, but as long as you are happy with the results you are getting, that's what matters. Personal gains look promising and a romantic relationship engaging. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Forward motion should be what motivates you. Learn all you can, and incorporate the knowledge and information into what you are trying to do. Personal changes should be kept a secret until you have all your plans in place. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Live within your means, even if someone else doesn't. Don't feel the need to keep up or to impress anyone. Be yourself and use your intelligence to figure out how best to get what you want without going into debt. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't fret or get angry when you should be using your imagination to come up with good ideas. Look at partnerships and consider how best to keep them equal. Set up some new rules that will even out responsibilities. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Mingle with people who have just as much or more to offer, and make plans to collaborate. Your enthusiasm will spark interest that leads to new possibilities. Traveling, self-improvement and playful banter with someone who interests you are encouraged. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Don't let the little things get to you. Go out and enjoy the company of people who understand you and who know how to contribute and want to explore new projects and pastimes. Refuse to let someone manipulate or ruin your plans. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Tension will mount regarding matters concerning your home or a partnership. Try not to get annoyed. Keep the peace and take care of your responsibilities, then move on to social events, pampering and taking care of your personal needs. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Do something different, and you'll grab the attention of someone who will complement you and your plans. Don't take a chance while traveling or engaging in something that could result in loss or injury. Stay focused to reach your destination. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* You may want change, but someone is likely to give you false information that can lead to a costly mistake. Trust in yourself, not someone trying to make money selling you something that won't live up to its sales pitch. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Emotional matters will sprout quickly if you make an assumption or speak on someone else's behalf. It would be best not to get involved in other people's affairs. Focus on what's going on in your own backyard. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Look at your options, and consider how best to utilize your attributes in order to bring in more cash. A professional change or handling your finances differently is encouraged and will help stabilize your standard of living. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Listen carefully, take notes and do your research before you make a change that isn't reversible. Walk away from high-pressure situations or someone who is bullying you to donate or take on more than you can handle. Don't spend unnecessarily. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are proactive, energetic and motivated. You are persuasive and ambitious.

To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

1		8	5			2
	5		9		8	
	9	4		7		
9		7	4	3		8
	4		2		9	
3	7	9	1			4
	5		7	8		
	7		1		3	
6		3	8			5

Difficulty Level ★ 1/14

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

8	4	3	6	1	5	7	2	9
9	7	2	3	4	8	5	1	6
1	5	6	2	9	7	4	8	3
3	1	7	9	8	6	2	5	4
6	2	4	7	5	1	3	9	8
5	8	9	4	2	3	1	6	7
4	6	1	5	7	9	8	3	2
2	3	8	1	6	4	9	7	5
7	9	5	8	3	2	6	4	1

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/2

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

'GREY'S ANATOMY' IS BACK — Solution: 12 letters

H	E	I	G	L	S	E	N	S	M	S	S	Y	A	D
A	C	S	E	M	I	H	R	S	C	P	E	M	N	R
R	N	S	C	E	S	A	O	O	K	L	A	H	I	E
A	A	M	A	H	T	T	R	N	I	R	T	S	T	H
S	M	A	L	S	A	S	N	A	D	I	A	N	S	P
Y	O	I	L	M	O	M	B	E	D	A	R	E	I	E
R	R	L	I	N	W	K	B	E	I	D	D	K	R	H
A	Ⓐ	Ⓛ	Ⓔ	Ⓧ	E	G	R	E	Y	T	N	C	C	S
E	V	I	L	L	N	E	Y	S	R	B	A	I	L	E
R	E	W	L	D	M	E	N	R	C	S	H	P	K	J
C	R	Y	E	G	S	O	H	U	N	T	C	O	A	U
C	A	R	N	P	S	A	D	N	A	R	I	M	R	S
M	E	A	M	L	W	E	B	B	E	R	E	P	E	T
K	Y	E	I	X	E	L	L	I	S	S	S	E	V	I
T	D	W	N	A	O	L	S	R	O	T	C	O	D	N

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Alex, Bailey, Callie, Chambers, Chandra, Cristina, Days, Dempsey, Derek, Doctors, Drama, Ellen, Ellis, Grey, Heigl, Hunt, James, Justin, Karev, Kelly, Kind, Lexie, McCreary, McKidd, Meredith, Miranda, Nurse, Owen, Pass, Patients, Pickens, Pompeo, Raver, Rhimes, Romance, Sarah, Scorsone, Shepherd, Shonda, Sloan, Stars, Webber, Williams, Wilson, Yang

Last Friday's Answer: Home Plate

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

CLASSIFIED ADS

WHATZIT Solution: Think things through

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PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: ITB19-COTA/FTA-037

SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 07, 2019 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE AND DELIVERY OF FOUR (4) VANS 2018 OR NEWER ADA COMPLIANT MOBILITY EQUIPPED TRANSIT VANS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE OF TRANSIT AUTHORITY"

THE SPECIFICATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER **JANUARY 07, 2019** AT COTA, OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, 2ND FLOOR SUITE 216 MARIANAS BUSINESS PLAZA, NARU LOOP, SUSUPE, SAIPAN.

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL AT **cota16assistant@gmail.com NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, 4:30, LOCAL TIME, JANUARY 23, 2019.**

THIS PROJECT IS FUNDED BY THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) OF THE U.S DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION; BIDDERS ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH FTA FEDERAL CONTRACT CLAUSES AS APPLICABLE.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

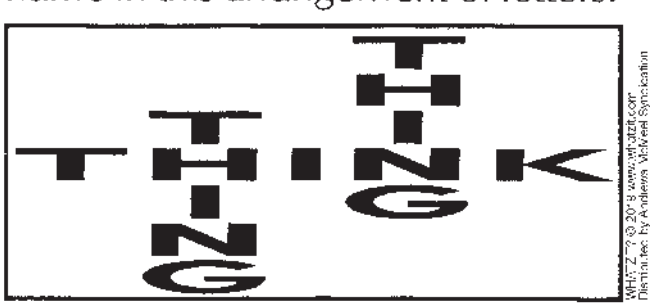
THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ALFREDA P. CAMACHO
S/A FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



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- Applicant Must
  - o Have excellent written and verbal communications skills.
  - o Have the ability to work independently and be a self-starter.
  - o Be competent with Word, Excel and PowerPoint and with website and social media management and editing.
  - o Be able to organize, compile & interpret data
  - o Have reliable transportation during working hours
  - o Be a US Citizen or Green Card applicant

Send resume with work references
to islandtrainingsolutions@gmail.com.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality

Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor
Victor B. Hocog
Lt. Governor

DEQ: P.O. Box 501304, DCRM: P.O. Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950-1304
DEQ Tel.: (670) 664-8500/01; Fax: (670) 664-8540
DCRM Tel.: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.deq.gov.mp and www.crm.gov.mp

Eli D. Cabrera
Administrator
Ray S. Masga
Director, DEQ
Janice Castro
Director, DCRM

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality is giving this reminder notice that the importation and sale of foreign, misbranded, adulterated, and/or any unregistered pesticides and pesticide devices is a violation of the CNMI Pesticide Regulations. The legal definition of a pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling or mitigating any pest.

In accordance with NMIAC § 65-70-101, all pesticides and pesticide devices must be contain the following USEPA labeling requirements in English: Name of pesticide in bold letters; restricted use (if applicable); description of pest controlled; chemical name of pesticide; active ingredients; appropriate signal words (caution, warning, or danger); and directions for proper use.

It is unlawful in the CNMI to import or sell any misbranded and/or adulterated pesticide or pesticide device that is not actively registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and does not meet the USEPA's product labeling requirements. Or pesticides and pesticide devices whose labeling bear any statement, design, or graphic representation relative thereto or to its ingredients which is false or misleading in any particular.

The importation, sale or distribution of illegal pesticides in the CNMI places our community, especially children, at risk of being harmed. The BECQ Pesticide Management branch is charged with the responsibility to regulate the importation, sale and distribution of pesticides, legal or illegal to ensure public health and a clean and healthy environment. BECQ staff regularly inspects business establishments for any misbranded products. Should misbranded items be found, all misbranded pesticides will be confiscated and penalties may be assessed.

For more information please contact BECQ at 664-8500 or 664-8511.

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Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax. (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Petitioner Armando Villafuerte

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 16-0252**
ANGELINA BORJA PEREDO aka ANGELINA P. RIOS,	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
Deceased.	Date: January 31, 2018 Time: 9:00 am Location: TBA Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho

TO ANNIE R. TOKYO AND MELINDA T. HOSSAIN, ALL HEIRS, AND INTERESTED PARTIES:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Administratrix Daisy Ramirez has filed a Petition for Decree of Final Distribution in the above-titled matter. The hearing on the petition is scheduled to be heard on the date and time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing.

Dated this 11th day of December, 2018.

/s/ Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court

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Wages - $10.00 per hour

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Tel: 670 322-3333

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Rosemarie Estrella Penaroyo, Petitioner,	:	FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 19-001
vs.	:	
Antonio Jose C. Arriola, Respondent,	:	**SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION**

TO THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 505932 CK Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at P.O. Box 500307 Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgement by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 2nd day of January, 2019.
/s/
Clerk of Court

TAHANNIE LYNN AYUYU
P.O. BOX 7866 SVRB
SAIPAN, MP 96950
(670) 989-7258

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In The Matter Of The Petition For The Change Of Name Of:	:	FCD CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 19-0011
TAHANNIE LYNN AYUYU	:	NOTICE OF HEARING
Petitioner	:	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on April 8, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom MBP before Honorable Judge Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 8th day of January, 2019.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court

/s/
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

Rams, Cowboys seek postseason breakthroughs

LOS ANGELES (AP)—As if the pressure of playing for the Los Angeles Rams' first playoff victory in 14 years wasn't enough, Todd Gurley carries an extra imperative into the Coliseum on Saturday night.

"Basically, everybody I know hates the Cowboys," the Rams' All-Pro running back said. "They've been hitting me up all week, so I've got to try to take care of business for those guys."

And then there's Wade Phillips, the 71-year-old Los Angeles defensive coordinator who was fired as Dallas head coach in 2010 and replaced by his assistant, Jason Garrett. With a straight face, Phillips calls the divisional playoff showdown "a revenge game for me."

The Cowboys (11-6) inspire strong feelings across the football world, but these Rams (13-3) are just joking around. Their ability to do so indicates they're not feeling crushed by the extraordinary weight on both teams in this matchup under the Hollywood spotlight.

A trip to the NFC championship game is more than enough motivation for two franchises that haven't been that close to a Super Bowl in many years.

"It's a prime-time game in the playoffs," Gurley said. "What better game would you want? Playoff game in LA versus America's Team. It's going to be a great matchup."

Dallas has won three playoff games in 22 years, and it hasn't won a road playoff game since January 1993. The Cowboys haven't reached the NFC title game since the 1995 season, losing five straight times in the divisional round.

"Yeah, it would mean a lot," Dallas quarterback Dak Prescott said. "And more than what it means for the past, but because of this group of guys that I'm going to do it with. Just simply how we've been able to persevere (through) all the adversity and everything that we've been through together, off the field, on the field. I just know we've got the right guys to do it."

The Rams haven't been in a conference championship game since the 2001-02 season, and they only ended a 12-year playoff drought last January with a home loss to Atlanta in the wild-card round. Coach Sean McVay's incredible turnaround of his franchise has inspired a wave of copycat coaching hires across the NFL this month, but McVay knows it doesn't mean much without his first playoff victory.

The matchup also showcases two of the best young quarterback-running back combinations in the league. Prescott and Ezekiel Elliott are the heart of a team that has won eight of its last nine games since trading for receiver Amari Cooper, capped by Dallas' gritty victory over Seattle last week in the wild-card round.

Jared Goff and Gurley make it happen for the Rams, who rolled to an 11-1 record with a nearly unstoppable offense. Losses to the Bears and Eagles in December raised questions about their run defense and offensive line, but McVay's team is rested and determined to make a Super Bowl run .

AP

In this Sunday, Oct. 1, 2017, file photo, Los Angeles Rams running back Todd Gurley (30) is stopped by Dallas Cowboys linebacker Jaylon Smith, rear, and safety Jeff Heath (38) after Gurley lept over Heath on a carry in the second half of an NFL football game in Arlington, Texas.

LeBron cleared for more activity, still not ready to play

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. (AP)—LeBron James' strained groin is turning out to be perhaps the most significant injury of the famously durable superstar's 16-year NBA career.

James likely will miss at least three more games after being cleared to increase his on-court activity in his comeback from the injury, the Lakers announced Thursday after an evaluation by their medical staff.

The Lakers say James' healing is "progressing," and the four-time NBA MVP will participate in more functional basketball activities during the upcoming week. But the team also says it will provide another update on Jan. 16, which probably means James will miss the Lakers' three upcoming games against Utah, Cleveland and Chicago.

AP

Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James walks off the court after straining his left groin during the second half of the team's NBA basketball game against the Golden State Warriors on Tuesday, Dec. 25, 2018, in Oakland, Calif. James left the game, which the Lakers won, 127-101.

If James sits out as expected, he will miss 11 consecutive games before his next update, and he will have been out of action for over three weeks since getting hurt during the Lakers' win at Golden State on Christmas.

Those are significant numbers: James never missed more than 13 games during any of his first 15 NBA seasons, and he never sat out for more than two full weeks during his decorated tenures with the Cavaliers or the Miami Heat.

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Night bonuses in his first trio of appearances, Frank Camacho rapidly became a must see fighter, and while he emerged from those three bouts with a 1-2 record, I bet if you've seen him compete, you remember the fights and not the result. In this one, it was Dober taking the decision in a 15-minute bout where each welterweight left it all in the octagon," stated in the part of the story about Camacho and Dober.

The 29-year-old has yet to respond to *Saipan Tribune*'s questions, asking for his comments in this latest recognition and his fight plans for 2019. However, in his official Facebook account, he posted the story on the Top 10 Fights of 2018 and vowed to keep going all out in his next bouts.

"In 2019, we will still be bringing it," Camacho said.

His bloody encounter with Dober was the penultimate in his four-fight contract with UFC. Camacho lost his first against China's Jingliang Li and then won over Australia's Damien Brown before falling short anew to Dober. His last was versus Geoff Neal and the veteran MMA fighter lost, again. Though he took three defeats, Camacho, in an earlier interview, indicated that the three Fight of the Night honors he earned would be enough to get him another chance to be octagon cage for UFC.

Meanwhile, the Robert Whittaker-Yoel Romero 2 bout in June during the UFC 225 in Chicago, Illinois landed on the No.1 spot of the rankings.

The equally intense battle ended in a controversial, as some claimed, win for Whittaker of New Zealand.

NMIFA

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the 2018 NMIFA Fall Youth League, M-League, and Dove Women's League and will start with the spring season of all division games next month, as repairs at the venues, particularly at the NMITC, are being fast-tracked.

Besides kicking off the spring season of the different leagues, Mita said they will still work out with the various schools to boost NMIFA's grassroots program.

"We also plan to start P.E. support program, which is one of our important grassroots programs, and we will be coordinating with the schools," the NMIFA technical director said.

In the P.E. support program, NMIFA staff members/coaches visit schools and identify talents. Once students are selected, they are trained regularly, teaching them the basic skills and techniques, while tournaments are designed for them to determine their progress. Students are later encouraged to hook up with local clubs to have them stay with the program.

As for their national team program, Mita said they will be busy with several off-island tournaments and training camps.

"We will keep both the men and women national teams active in 2019. We plan to play in the EAFF (East Asian Football Federation) U15 girls tournament, the AFC (Asian Football Confederation) U19 and U15 boys, and the Marianas Cup in Guam. We are also looking at off-islands training camps in preparation for these tournaments," Mita said.

"We will keep going forward for the further development of CNMI soccer in 2019 and beyond," he added.

Japanese club gives donation

Meanwhile, the Bears—a football club from Japan and is handled by former NMIFA technical director Kiyoshi Sekiguchi—donated $450 to NMIFA to help in the association's recovery efforts from Super Typhoon Yutu. The donations came from Bears players, members, and staff.

"It's a very nice gesture from them and we truly appreciate their donation. Bears guys, coach Seki (Kiyoshi) and Kei Kitamura, have a strong relationship with the CNMI soccer community and we hope to continue the ties. We thanked Bears players and staff for their generosity," said Mita, who personally received the donation from Kiyoshi when the former visited Japan last month.

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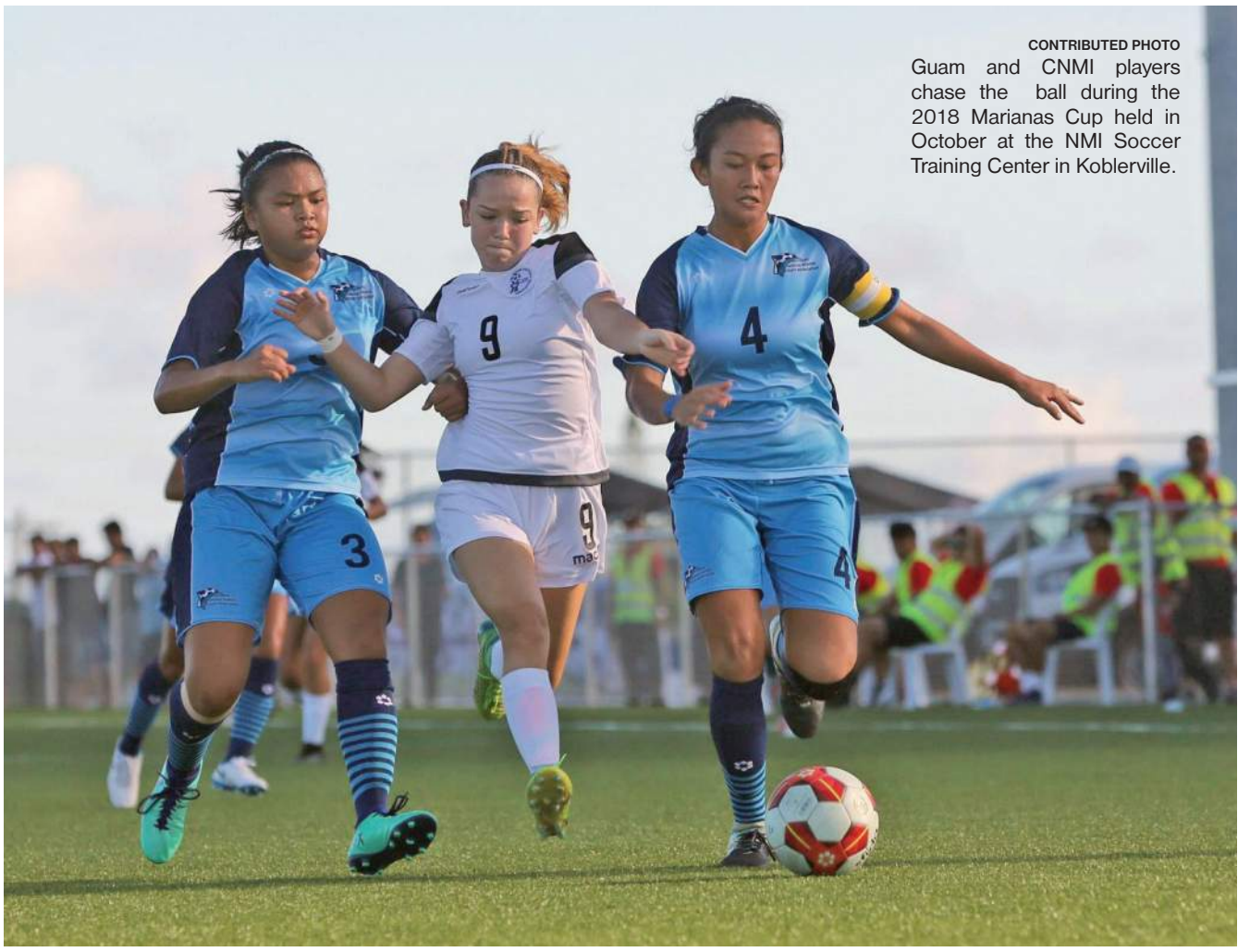
NMIFA to push forward with programs



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Guam and CNMI players chase the ball during the 2018 Marianas Cup held in October at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Northern Mariana Islands Football Association technical director Michiteru Mita, left, receives the Bears donation from former CNMI national coach Kiyoshi Sekiguchi during a brief turnover ceremony in Japan last month.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

After a temporary setback, Northern Mariana Islands Football Association is optimistic that it will be able to implement its programs and hold activities this year.

Games at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville and other soccer-related events were suspended in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Yutu that hammered Saipan and Tinian in late October last year. Weeks after the typhoon hit the islands, NMIFA joined the rest of the community in doing relief and recovery activities, hoping to get back on their feet.

"Our FA (football association) staff members are working hard to repair the training center as soon as possible so we can resume soccer activities. Hopefully we can resume the youth/men's/women's leagues in February 2019 and go back to the normal soccer season," NMIFA technical director Michiteru Mita said.

The association canceled the remaining matches of

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Carol in main draw of Australian tourney

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The CNMI's Carol Lee still got a chance to compete in the main draw of the ongoing 2019 AGL Loy Yang Traralgon Junior International.

Lee, who was eliminated in the qualifying tournament for the singles main draw, made it to the 32-team doubles field and was scheduled to play in the first round last Saturday afternoon at the hard court of the Traralgon Tennis Association in Victoria, Australia.

The 17-year-old was paired against India's Shivani Amineni and the wild card duo was to face a tough opponent in the No. 7 seed Kamila Bartone of Latvia and Guilia Morlet of France. Lee's teammate is ranked No. 153 in the world at the end of the 2018 season, while their foes are in the Top 100 with Bartone ranked at No. 27 and Morlet at No. 86. Morlet is in the main draw of the singles, too and won her first match versus Megan Smith of Australia, 6-2, 6-0, while Bartone had a heartbreaking loss to Amber Marshall, also from the host country, 1-6, 6-3, 3-6.

The Bartone-Morlet and Lee-Ameneni tiff was scheduled to start at 3pm last Saturday, but results have yet to posted at the ITF Juniors website at press time.

Meanwhile, Aussie Anastasia Berezov and Grace Schumacher were the first ones to win in the doubles event of the Grade 1 tournament after sweeping Russia's Elina Avanesyan and Maria Krupepina, 6-2, 6-2.

In the singles, 10 out of the 16 seeded players advanced to the second round with No. 1 Clara Tauson of Denmark and No. 2 Qinwen Zheng of China coasting past their first round foes.

Lee missed the singles main draw after winning only one match in the qualifying tournament. She needed two victories to enter the main draw.

Camacho-Dober duel tagged one of the best

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Frank "The Crank" Camacho may have lost his bout with Drew Dober, but still won the respect of the mixed martial arts community, as their Ultimate Fighting Championship bout at the Spectrum Centre in Charlotte, North Carolina was named in the Top 10 Fights of 2018.

Camacho and the Omaha-born warrior Dober appeared in the UFC on FOX 27: Jacare vs Brunson 2 last Jan. 27 with the Marianas pride losing via decision, but not after trading punches and standing toe-to-toe with the former. The duel was so close and action-packed that two of the three judges had Dober winning by only a point, 29-28, and the two fighters combined for more than 600 strikes thrown.

His match against Dober earned Camacho his third Fight of the Night honors and was ranked No. 9 in the Top 10 Fights of 2018 story written by Thomas Gerbasi and posted at the official UFC website.

"With three UFC appearances and three Fight of the

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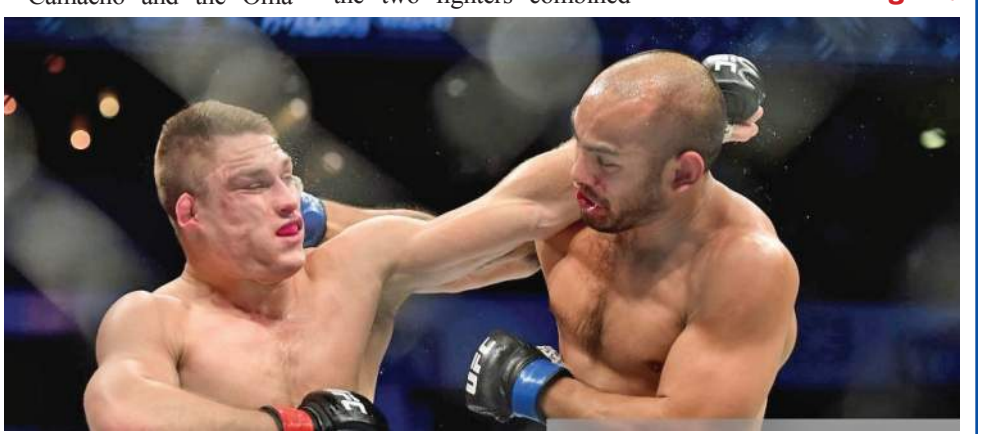

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Frank "The Crank" Camacho, right, punches Drew Dober during their bout in UFC on FOX 27: Jacare vs Brunson 2 last Jan. 27, 2018 at the Spectrum Centre in Charlotte, North Carolina.